MUSIC AND LIFE

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MUSIC AND LIFE

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MUSIC AND LIFE

A STUDY OF THE RELATIONS BETWEEN OURSELVES AND MUSIC

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BY

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"*The Development of Symphonic Music*"
AND (WITH D. G. MASON) OF
"*The Appreciation of Music*"

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INTRODUCTION

During the last twenty or thirty years there has been an enormous increase in the United States of what may be called "institutional" music. We have built opera houses, we have formed many new orchestras, and we have established the teaching of music in nearly all our public and private schools and colleges, so that a casual person observing all this, hearing from boastful lips how many millions per annum we spend on music, and adding up the various columns into one grand total, might arrive at the conclusion that we are really a musical people.

But one who looks beneath the surface — who reflects that the thing we believe, and the thing we love, that we do — would have to do a sum in subtraction also; would have to ask what music there is in our own households. He would find that in our cities and towns only an infinitesimal percentage of the inhabitants sing together for the pleasure of doing so, and that the task of keeping choral societies

together is as difficult as ever; that the music we take no part in, but merely listen to, is the music that flourishes; that our operatic singers, the most highly paid in the world, come to us annually from abroad and sing to us in languages that we cannot understand; that, in short, while music flourishes, much of it is bought and little of it is home-made. The deduction is obvious. This institutional music is a sort of largess of our prosperity. We are rich enough to buy the best the world affords. We institute music in our public schools and display our interest in it once a year — at graduation time. We see that our children take "music lessons" and judge the result likewise by their capacity to play us occasionally a very nice little piece. Men, in particular, — all potential singers, and *very much needing to sing*, — look upon it as a slightly effeminate or scarcely natural and manly thing to do. Music is, in short, too much our diversion, and too little our salvation.

And to form a correct estimate of the value of our musical activities we should need also to consider the quality of the music we hear; and this, in relation to the sums we have been

doing, might make complete havoc of our figures, because it would change their basic significance. For if it is bad music, the more we hear of it the worse off we are. If a city spends thirty thousand dollars a year on bad public-school music, it is a loser to the extent of some sixty thousand dollars. If your child is painfully acquiring a mechanical dexterity (or acquiring a painful mechanical dexterity) in pianoforte playing and is learning almost nothing about music, you lose twice what you pay and your child pays twice for her suffering. What is called "being musical" cannot be passed on to some one else or to something else; you cannot be musical vicariously — through another person, through so many thousand dollars, through civic pride, through any other of the many means we employ. Being musical does not necessarily lie in performing music; it is rather a *state* of being which every individual who can hear is entitled by nature to attain to in a greater or less degree.

Such are the musical conditions confronting us, and such are the possibilities open to us. My purpose is, therefore, to suggest ways of improving this situation, and of realizing these

possibilities; and, as a necessary basis for any such suggestions, to consider first the nature of music itself. Is it merely a titillation of the ear? Are Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert merely purveyors of sweetmeats? Does music consist in an astonishing dexterity in performance? Is it, as Whitman says, "what awakes in you when you are reminded by the instruments"? Or has it a life of its own, self-contained, self-expressive, and complete? These questions need to be asked — and answered — before we can formulate any method of improving our musical situation.

They are not asked. We blindly follow conventional practices; we make little effort to fathom the many delightful problems which every hearing of music presents to us; we submit to being baffled every time we hear an orchestra play; we take no forward step on the road to understanding. Beethoven was a heart, a mind, a will, and an imagination; we, in listening, absorb his emotion and hardly anything else. His grotesque outbursts make us uncomfortable, as would a solecism of behavior. His strange, bizarre, uncouth, and extraordinary themes, every one of which fits

perfectly into his plan, leave us wondering what he intends. His sentiment, which is always *relative* to his humor or his roughness, we understand only by itself.

Our children, after years of conventional music study, are finally taken to hear an orchestral concert. A great man is to speak to them. He does not use words. What he has to say issues forth in a myriad of sounds, now soft, now loud, now fast, now slow. This that the child hears is what is called *music*, seemingly a mere succession of sounds, really a vision of what a great man has seen of all those inner things of life which only he can truly see. These sounds are formed into a perfect order. Their very soul may hide in the peculiar tone of the oboe or horn; they change their significance a dozen times in as many moments; slender filaments of them run through and through as in a fairy web. The child gapes. "Is this music?" it says; "I thought music was the black and white keys, or holding my hand right, or scales, or the key of F or G, or sonatinas, or something." No one has ever told her what music really is. She has only her delicate, tender, childlike feelings as a guide

What she has been doing may have been as little like music as grammar is like literature.

Both the child and the adult must be brought into contact with music; with rhythmic movement in all its delightful diversity; with great musical themes and the uses to which they are put by composers; with musical forms by means of which pieces of music are made coherent; with harmonies in their primary states, or blended into a thousand hues. They must learn to listen, so that, as the music unfolds, there takes place within them an unfolding which is the exact answer to the processes going on in the music. All this cannot be brought about save by intention.

It is the purpose of this book, then, to lead the reader by what capacity he possesses to such an understanding of the art of music as shall make every part of it intelligible to him. And since some readers may have little knowledge of music, this book also attempts to set forth the common grounds upon which all art rests, and to tempt those who are interested in the other arts to become inquisitive about music. Curiosity is a necessary element in human intelligence.

MUSIC AND LIFE

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CHAPTER I

WHAT IS MUSIC?

I. DISTINCTION BETWEEN MUSIC AND THE OTHER ARTS

Any discussion of the art of music, — of its significance in relation to ourselves, of its æsthetic qualities, or of methods of teaching it, — to be comprehensive, must be based on a clear recognition of the one important quality which is inherent in it, which distinguishes it from the other arts and which gives it its peculiar power. Painting and sculpture are definitive. It is not possible to create a great work in either of these mediums without a subject taken from life; for, however imaginative the work may be, it must depict something. In painting, for example, the very soul of a religious belief may shine from the canvas, — as in the Sistine Madonna, — but that belief cannot be there presented without physical em-

bodiment. And when the physical embodiment is reduced to its simplest terms, as in some of Manet's paintings, there is still the necessity of portrayal; Manet's wonderful light and opalescent color must fall on an object. Turner paints a mystical landscape, a mythological vale, such as haunts the dreams of poets, but it is impossible for him to produce the illusion *by itself;* the vale is a vale, human beings are there. Sculpture, which makes its effects by the perfection of its rhythms around an axis, and by its shadows, — effects of the most subtle and, at the same time, of the most elemental kind, — it, too, must portray; the emotion must take form and substance, and that form must be drawn from the outward, visible world.

In poetry the same limitations exist. It, too, must deal in human life with a certain definiteness. But the greatest poetry is continually struggling to slough off the garment of reality and free the soul from its trammels. It trembles on the verge of music, seeking to find words for what cannot be said, and attaining a great part of its meaning by a sublime euphony. The didactic is its grave.

Before I attempt to describe the peculiar quality which distinguishes music, it will be well to state quite clearly what it cannot do. This can best be understood by a comparison between it and poetry, which of all the arts is nearest to music, because it exists in the element of time, whereas painting and sculpture exist in space. Poetry is made up of words arranged in meaning and euphony. Each of these words signifies an object, idea, or feeling; the word "chair," for example, has come to mean an object to sit upon. Now, while notes in music are given certain alphabetical names indicating a pitch determined by sound waves, the use of these letters is arbitrary and has no connection with their original hieroglyphic and hieratic significance. The musical sound we call *a*, for example, means nothing as a sound, has no common or agreed-upon or archæological significance. Combine the note *a* with *c* and *e* in what is known as the common chord and you still have no meaning; combine *a* with other notes and form a melody from them, and you have perhaps beauty and coherence of form, — a pleasing sequence of sounds, — but still no meaning such as you

get from the combination of letters in a word like "chair." Combine *a* with a great many other notes into a symphony, and this coherence and beauty may become quite wonderful in effect, but it still remains untranslatable into other terms, and without such definite significance as is attained by combining words in poems. So we say that notes have no significance in themselves; that musical phrases have no meaning as have phrases in language; that melodies are not sentences, and symphonies not poems.

If we compare music with painting or sculpture we find much the same contrast. Just as music does not mean anything in the sense that words do, so it has no "subject" in the sense that Turner's The Fighting Téméraire has, or Donatello's David. It does not deal with objects. It cannot portray a ship or a star. It may seem to float, it may flash for a moment, but it does not describe or set forth. Furthermore, it cannot, strictly speaking, give expression to ideas. It may be so serious, so ordered, so equable — as in Bach — that we say its composer was a philosopher, but no item of his philosophy appears. Above all it

is unmoral,[1] and without belief or dogma. Too much stress can hardly be laid on this negative quality in music, for it is in this very disability that its greatest virtue lies. I shall refer later to the frequent tendency among listeners to avoid facing this problem by attaching meanings of their own to the music they hear. I need only note in passing that these so-called "meanings" seldom agree, and that the habit is the result either of ignorance of the true office of music, or of mental lassitude toward it. "It is not enough to enjoy yourself over a work of art," says Joubert; "you must enjoy it."

Now the one distinguishing quality of music is this: it finds its perfection in itself without relation to other objects. It is what it is in itself alone. It is non-definitive; it does not use symbols of something else; it cannot be translated into other terms. The poet seeks always a complete union of the thing said and the method of saying it. Flaubert seeks patiently and persistently for the one word which shall not only be the exact symbol of his

[1] It may, of course, be used with words of definite meaning; but we are speaking of pure music.

thought, but which shall fit his euphony. The painter so draws his objects, so distributes his colors, and so arranges his composition as to make of them plastic mediums for the expression of his thought, and the greatness of his picture depends first of all and inevitably on his power of fusing his subjects with his technique. In sculpture precisely the same process takes place. Neither of these arts actually copies nature; each "arranges" it for its own purpose.

In music this much-sought union of matter and manner is complete; the thing said and the method of saying it are one and indivisible. It is, as Pater says, "the ideal of all art whatever, precisely because in music it is impossible to distinguish the form from the substance or matter, the subject from the expression."

II. THE ELEMENTS OF MUSIC

The primal element in music is vibration. Sound-waves in some ordered sequence — silent till they strike our ears — are formed by our ingenuity and sense of order into patterns of beauty. They exist in time, not in space. They are motion. And these vibrations are

the very substance of all life; of stars in their courses, of the pulse-beats of the heart, of the mysterious communications from the nerves to the brain, of light, of heat, of color. The plastic arts are static. Painting has the power

> "to give
> To one blest moment snatched from fleeting time
> The appropriate calm of blest eternity."

Sculpture is motion caught in a moment of perfection. Music is motion always in perfection. This rhythm exists also in literature and the other arts. Poe would be nothing without it; Whitman uses it in long swelling undulations which are sometimes almost indistinguishable; the composition in a great painting is a rhythm; the Apollo Belvedere is all rhythm. But in music rhythm is a physical, moving property; rhythm in being, not rhythm caught in a poise. The possibilities of rhythmic play in music far exceed those in poetry, for in the latter the sense or meaning would be clouded by too much rhythmic complication. It would be impossible to do in poetry, for example, what Beethoven does at the beginning of a movement in one of his string quartettes,[1]

[1] The Scherzo of Opus 59, no. 1.

where the 'cello, entirely alone, repeats one note fifteen times in two rhythmic groups; there is no melody and no harmony — merely one reiterated rhythmic sound. It is also impossible for poetry to present three or four different rhythms simultaneously, as music often does; nor can poetic rhythms carry across a complete rhythmic disruption whose whole æsthetic sense lies in its relations to a permanent rhythm which it momentarily violates, as is the case in the first movement of Beethoven's Third Symphony. In short, rhythm in music has a diversity, a flexibility, and a physical vigor quite unparalleled in any other art.

Melody in music consists in a sequence of single sounds curved to some line of beauty. Whereas rhythm is conceivable without any intellectual quality, — as a purely physical manifestation, — melody implies some sense of design, since it progresses from one point in time to another, and without design would be merely a series of incoherent sounds. In this design rhythm plays a leading part, and the themes having the most perfect balance of rhythms are the most interesting. Examples

of diverse but highly coördinated melodies may be found in the slow movement of Beethoven's pianoforte sonata, Opus 13, and in Brahms's pianoforte quartette, Opus 60, the synthetic quality of which is like that of a finely constructed sentence. Melody, being design, gives conscious evidence of the personality of its creator. Schubert, for example, is like Keats and represents the type of pure lyric utterance. Bach, on the contrary, is essentially a thinker, and his melodies are full of vigorous and diversified rhythms.

Folk-song was the beginning of what we call "melody," and the best specimens of folk-songs are quite as perfect within their small range as are the greatest works of the masters. Their contour and rhythm are sometimes as delicately balanced as the mechanism of a fine instrument. And when we remember that these melodies were the spontaneous utterance of simple, untutored peoples who, in forming them, depended almost entirely on instinct, we realize how intimate a medium music is for the expression of feeling. People who could neither read nor write and who had little knowledge or experience of artistic objects could,

nevertheless, create perfect works of beauty in the medium of sound.

Harmony is an adjunct to the other two elements. It is in music something of what color is in painting. As contrasted with the long line of melody and the regular impulses in time of rhythm, harmony deals in masses. Melody carries the mind from one point to another; harmony strikes simultaneously and produces an immediate sensation. Its effect upon us is probably due to a subtle physical correspondence within ourselves to combinations of sounds that spring direct from nature. The whole history of music shows a gradual assimilation by human beings of new combinations of sounds, and it is probable that only the first chapters of that history have been written.

We have spoken of the synthetic quality of melody, and it is obvious that the larger the scope of music the more important this quality becomes. When a composer creates a sonata or symphony he must so dispose all his material — rhythms, melodies, and harmonies — as to give to the work perfect coherence. A work of art expressed in the element of time

needs this synthesis more than one expressed in space. For although there is in music no "subject," yet beauty is being unfolded and the need of a cumulative and coördinated expression of it is quite as great as it would be were the music "about" something. There are various ways of arranging musical material so as to attain this end. The chief principle of its synthesis is derived from the volatile nature of sound itself. It is this: that no one series of sounds formed into a melody can long survive the substitution of other series, unless there be given some restatement, or at least some reminder, of the first. The result of this is that in the early music there was an alternation of one phrase or one tune with another; and this in turn was followed by all sorts of experiments tending to bring about variety in unity. (These simple forms somewhat resemble what is known in poetry as the triolet.) The most common form in music is threefold. It is found in folk-songs, marches, minuets, nocturnes, and so forth, and — expanded to huge proportions — in symphonic movements. In folk-songs this form consists in repeating a first phrase after a second con-

trasting one. In minuets, nocturnes, romances, and the like, each part is a complete melody in itself. In a symphonic movement the first part — save in such notable exceptions as the first movement of the "Eroica" of Beethoven — contains all the thematic material, the second contains what is called the "development" of the material stated in the first, and the third part restates the first with such changes as shall give it new significance.

It is in this synthetic quality that much of the greatness of symphonic music lies. No other quality, however fine in itself, can take its place. Schumann, for example, created interesting and beautiful themes in profusion, but his compositions in the larger forms lack a complete synthesis. Bach was the greatest master in this respect. So perfect is the ordering of his material that it gives that impression of inevitability which distinguishes all great art everywhere. It is obvious enough that parallels to this form will be found in literature, for it is a part of life and nature. It is youth, manhood, and old age; it is sunrise, noon, and sunset; it is spring, summer, and winter. So it must be; for art is only life in

terms of beauty, and human life is only nature expressing itself in terms of man and woman. This then is the thing we call music: rhythm, melody, and harmony arranged into forms of beauty, existing in time. It is without meaning, it is without "subject," it is without idea. It creates a world of its own, fictitious, fabulous, and irrelevant — a world of sound, evanescent yet indestructible.

III. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MUSIC

Music deals first of all with feeling or emotion. But since emotion may be guided by the mind and transfused by the imagination, — since emotion is not a separate and isolated part of our being, — so music may be so ordered by the mind and so transfused by the imagination as to become intellectual and imaginative. It is true that the greater part of the music produced and performed deals only with emotion, but this is equally true of literature. The popular novel is nine tenths emotion, one tenth mind, and the rest imagination. So it is with music, though such illogical invention as one constantly finds in many popular novels would be intolerable in any music.

Since there seems to be an incongruity between the statement that music has no definite meaning and the statement that it is intellectual, let us take a specific illustration and see if we cannot reconcile the apparent confliction.

We must first of all distinguish between the quality itself and the expression of the quality. A person may have a mind stored with wisdom and be completely what we call "intellectual," without ever expressing himself by a spoken or written word. His wisdom exists by itself and for itself, entirely separated from its expression. If he expresses himself, and with skill, we call that expression literature, but, in any case, it remains wisdom. And what is wisdom? It is what Mr. Eliot describes a liberal education to be — "a state of mind"; it is the fusion of knowledge with experience, with feeling, and with imagination.

Now words are symbols which diminish in their efficacy as they try to compass feeling and imagination. If the wise man is cold, he can say, "I am cold"; but if he wishes to tell you of his idea of God, he has no words adequate for the purpose, because he is dealing with something which is not in the domain of

knowledge alone — which he can feel, or perhaps imagine, but cannot define. The reason alone never even touches the far-away circle of that perfection which we believe to exist, and the subtle inner relations between man and the visible and invisible world refuse to be harnessed to language. For these he finds expression in some form of beauty. "The beautiful," says Goethe, "is a manifestation of the secret laws of nature which, but for this appearance, had been forever concealed from us."

So we say that in wisdom the qualities we call insight, feeling, and imagination must find for themselves some more plastic medium of expression than language. And when that plastic medium, though non-definitive, has those qualities of coherence, continuity, and form which are essential to all intellectual expression, we are justified in calling it "intellectual." Let us take for our specific illustration the first movement of the Ninth Symphony of Beethoven. It is impossible to imagine this as an expression of feeling only, untouched by thought or by imagination. The inevitable conclusion arrived at by any person who un-

derstands it is that the feeling is absolutely controlled by the mind, and that it is imagination that gives it its extraordinary effect. Compare it with the first movement of Tschaikovsky's "Pathétique Symphony" where emotion runs riot; the difference is as great as that between "Victory" and "The Deemster." Compare it with a symphony by Mendelssohn, and the contrast is as vivid as that between a novel by Meredith and one by Miss Braddon. Beethoven's music contains, in the first place, themes whose import all completely receptive persons feel to be profound. (That these themes do not so impress others is due either to atrophy of the musical faculty, to mental lassitude, or to lack of experience of great music.) These themes are presented in such design as not only to make the whole movement entirely coherent, but to give it a sense of rushing onward to an inevitable conclusion. So intensive is their treatment that almost the whole five hundred or more measures grow out of the original theme or thesis, some fifteen measures long. So imaginative is it that it seems to gather to itself all related things in heaven and earth and fuse them into

one. In short, we must say that this music emanates from the mind of a great man, who has subjected emotion to the control of the will and who has exercised that highest function of the mind that we call imagination.

May we not say, then, that this is wisdom? Shall we deny it because it cannot be spelled out word by word? Shall we not rather say that music is a means of expressing the deepest wisdom, that which defies categorical expression? May we not accept Schopenhauer's saying: "Music is an image of the will"? Are we not justified in stating that music is even an expression of the deepest relation with the visible and invisible world which the soul of man is capable of experiencing, and that these relations, inexpressible in more concrete manifestations, are expressible in music? The pathos and resignation and courage in the first movement of the Ninth Symphony of Beethoven are not his or yours or mine; they are the qualities themselves in their infinite being, more true, more noble, more pure than his or yours or mine. May we not, then, even go so far as to say that music tells us the deepest truths of human life; that "it comes," as Sy-

monds says, "speaking the highest wisdom in a language our reason does not understand because it is older and deeper and closer than reason?"

IV. "BEAUTY IS TRUTH, TRUTH BEAUTY"

I have already stated that the other arts have for their ideal that fusing of subject and expression which in music is complete, and I have further stated that the purpose or object of music is to present emotion ordered and guided by the mind and illumined by the imagination. In this latter respect all the arts are alike. It is in the very nature of their being that they seek to find the heart of the great secret. The purpose of painting and sculpture is not to present objects as objects, but to set them forth in such harmonious perfection of line and color and rhythm as will reveal their deepest significance. The greatest examples of the plastic arts cannot be understood through sense-perception of objects. Rembrandt is a greater painter than Bougereau, not only because he has superior technique, but because he has deeper insight. This is why the "subject" in painting is comparatively unimportant.

It is the same with literature. In "Jane Eyre" the "subject" is more tangible and vivid than in "Villette," but the latter is the finer book, because the technical skill is greater, the insight deeper. "There are no good subjects or bad subjects," says Hugo; "there are only good poets and bad poets." Any subject is interesting when a master-mind presents it in full significance. A custom-house is a prosaic thing, and a custom-house that has neither exports nor imports, but only a few sleepy old pensioners dozing in the sun, might be thought a dull subject for a writer; but Hawthorne's imagination and subtlety of literary expression clothe it with both beauty and significance. Even the noblest and most tragic deeds find their best justification in a sublime harmony of beauty. The Greeks knew this well. Euripides, in "The Trojan Women," puts on the lips of Hecuba these words: —

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"Had He not turned us in his hand, and thrust
Our high things low and shook our hills as dust,
We had not been this splendor, and our wrong
An everlasting music for the song
Of earth and heaven!" [1]

[1] Gilbert Murray translation.

Deeds, monuments, cities, and civilizations fade into nothingness, but a few words, or a strain of music turned by an artist, will live on forever. The battle of Gettysburg will become merely a paragraph of history, the causes for which it was fought will be as nothing, but the words spoken by Lincoln will be preserved for all time, not because they were wise, but because they were wise and beautiful.

There is no escape from this condition. An occasional great writer has railed at beauty, only to prove finally that his own permanence depended on it. Carlyle, for example, was more caustic than usual when he discussed poetry. His comment on Browning's "The Ring and the Book" ran thus: "A wonderful book, one of the most wonderful ever written. I re-read it all through—all made out of an 'Old Bailey' story that might have been told in ten lines, and only wants forgetting." Yet the best part of "Sartor Resartus" is its beauty, and there are in "The French Revolution" many passages of quite perfect poetic imagery and characterization without which it would lose much of its value. What we call "Carlyle" is no longer a man; nor is it a philosophy, or a his-

tory; it is nothing but a *style*, a manner of saying things — an individual, characteristic, and strange blend of hard and soft, of high and low, of rugged and tender, all struggling with a Puritanical conscience. So we say that beauty is the lodestone by which all life is tested.

No game can be perfectly played unless the physical motions are timed in beauty; no machine will act save in perfect synthesis; no character is strong until it attains a harmony within itself. Beauty is the matrix in which life shall be finally moulded.

All forms of artistic expression, then, require that we shall see the object not as fact but as art. If it is fact — that is, merely an isolated object or event — it remains insignificant until some artist catches it up into the wider realm in which it belongs and sets it forth in some form of beauty. If we accept this conception of all the arts as seeking the inner sense of things, as portraying life in its essence rather than in its outward manifestations, we shall be able to understand the peculiar power of music. It becomes then, not merely a series of sounds arranged so as to

be euphonious and pleasing to the ear, but a book of life which contains the ultimate expression of our instinct and of our wisdom. The Third Symphony of Beethoven, for example, gives us a more convincing presentment of heroic struggle than is to be found in the other arts or in literature, first, because it has the power to present it in the element of time, which is an essential part of any heroic deed; second, because it presents it as a quality disassociated from a particular heroism and therefore elevated into a type and made eternal; and third, because it presents it in conjunction with those other qualities without which there can be no heroism at all. (For no quality in life or element in nature exists for us save as the opposite or reverse of something else. What we call light is comprehensible only as the opposite of darkness; love is the opposite of hate, cold of heat, and so forth.)

Each of the other arts has one or two of these qualities; none has all of them. The novelist, for example, can use the first and last but not the second. Meredith's "Vittoria" is an ideal presentment of the struggle for Italian

unity, but the heroism which constitutes the essence of the book has to find expression through actual persons. So the greatest virtue of music lies not alone in its peculiar unification of matter and manner, its artistic perfection, but in the power which that gives it to create a world not based on the outward and the visible, but on that invisible realm of thought, feeling, and aspiration which is our real world. For if there is any one certain historical fact, it is that from the earliest times until now man has continually sought some escape from reality, some building up of a perfect world of ideal beauty which should still his eternal dissatisfaction with the imperfections and inconsistencies of his own life. It is in the very nature of his situation that he should seek some perfection somewhere. So he has tried to paint this perfection on canvas, idealizing life and nature into a satisfying form of beauty; or he has carved a physical perfection in marble to deify himself and give himself a place in nature; or he has built up for himself a world of magical words in which all his noblest dreams strive for expression. Everywhere and always he has had this dream, which has

saved him when all else failed. And the noblest of his dreamers have been those whose imaginations have transcended the limitations of the actual and brought it into relation with the unknown.

Music, obeying the great laws that underlie all life and to which all the arts are subject, having for its means of expression the most plastic of all media, depending on intuitive perception of truth, not compelled to perpetuate objects, dealing with that larger part of man's being which lies hidden beneath both his acts and his thoughts, — that which Carlyle calls "the deep fathomless domain of the Unconscious," — music is the one perfect medium for this dream of humanity. In its expression of human emotions it enjoys the inestimable advantage of entire irrelevance. It does not have to develop a character or person, but only an attribute or quality. The "Eroica" symphony, for example, has all the force of a mythological epic in which the heroes are pure spirit-types of humanity, of no age or time — gods, if you will, and above human limitations.

This is the quality of music that makes it

precious to us. It builds for us an *immaterial* world — not made of objects, or theories, or dogmas, or philosophies, but of pure spirit — a means of escape from the thralldom of every day.

CHAPTER II

MUSIC FOR CHILDREN

I. TRAINING THE SENSE FOR BEAUTY

In what I have to say about music for children I am not unmindful of the diversity of American life, and of the prevalent idea that Americans do not pay much attention to music (or to any other form of beauty) because they live in a new country in which the greater part of their energy is devoted to subduing nature and carving their fortunes. As a nation we are said to be too diverse to have evolved any definite æsthetic practice, and we suppose ourselves too busy with the practical things in life to pay much attention to it.

While it is doubtless true that there are numberless prosperous American families in which the words "art" and "literature" mean nothing whatever, this condition is due, in most cases, not to lack of time, but to lack of inclination. We, like other people, do what we like to do. No real attention is paid in

childhood to the cultivation of a love of the beautiful; very little attention is paid to it in the educational institutions where we are trained; so we grow up and enter upon life with a desultory liking for music, with a distinct lack of appreciation for poetry, and with almost no interest in painting or sculpture.

And this condition is likely to increase rather than diminish as time goes on, until, having finally arrived at moments of leisure and finding that neither our money nor any other material possession gives us any deep or permanent satisfaction, we turn to beauty only to be confronted with the old warning: "Too late, ye cannot enter now." For we have arrived at the time when, in Meredith's phrase, "Nature stops, and says to us, 'Thou art now what thou wilt be.'" For this capacity for understanding and loving great books and paintings and music has to grow with our own growth and cannot be postponed to another season. The average American man is supposed to have no time for these things. He has time, but he refuses to turn it into leisure, — leisure which means contemplation and thoughtfulness, — though he very likely knows

that this has been accomplished over and over again by men who have saved out of a busy life for that purpose a little time every day.

One recalls Darwin's pathetic statement wherein he describes his early love for poetry and music, and the final complete loss of those "capabilities" through neglect. "The loss of these tastes," he says, "is a loss of happiness, and may possibly be injurious to the intellect, and more probably to the moral character by enfeebling the emotional part of our nature."

The intellect of man, in itself, is never supreme or sufficient. Feeling or instinct is half of knowledge. "Whoever walks a furlong without sympathy," says Whitman, "walks to his own funeral drest in his shroud." Of any man, American or otherwise, who lives his life unmindful of all beauty we may justly say, as Carlyle said of Diderot, "He dwelt all his days in a thin rind of the Conscious; the deep fathomless domain of the Unconscious whereon the other rests and has its meaning was not under any shape surmised by him."

Must not the education of children in beauty begin, then, with their parents? Must they not be aroused, at least, to an *intellectual* con-

viction of its value, even though they have missed its joy? Can the matter be safely left to the jurisdiction of the schools themselves whose curricula are already overcrowded with methods of escape from this very thing? Does not the school answer the general conception of education obtaining among the fathers and mothers of the school-children? Can it be expected — is it possible for it — to rise far above that conception? My object is therefore to suggest, first, that the perception of beauty is, in the highest sense, education; second, that music is especially so, because it is the purest form of beauty; and, third, that music is the only form of beauty by means of which very young children can be educated, because it is the only form accessible to them.

Need I point out that there has never been a time in the history of mankind when human beings have not paid tribute to beauty? In their attempt to escape what may be called the traffic of life and to rise above its sordid limitations, have they not always and everywhere created for themselves some sort of detached ideal by means of which they justified themselves in an otherwise unintelligible world?

This ideal may have been a god of stone, but it figured for them a perfect absolution. Surrounded by brutal forces about which they knew nothing, subject to pestilence, to war, to starvation, to the fury of the elements, unable safely to shelter their bodies, they built for their souls a safe elysium. This ideal was always one of order and beauty; every civilization has possessed it, and it was to each civilization not only religion, but also what we call "art."

I referred in the first chapter to that quality in art which consists in its "holding a mirror up to nature," and thus focusing our attention. Browning expresses this in "Fra Lippo Lippi," where he says, —

> "For, don't you mark, we 're made so that we love
> First when we see them painted, things we have passed
> Perhaps a hundred times nor cared to see."

But the highest office of art is not so much to attract our attention to beautiful objects as to make us realize through the artist's skill what the objects signify. It is the artist who so depicts life as to make it intelligible to us; it is he who sees all those deeper relations which underlie all things; he, and he only, can so

present human aspirations and human actions as to lift them out of the maze and give them order and sequence. Through all the welter of political theories, of philosophies, of dogmas insisted on at the point of excommunication; amid the discoveries of science and the tendency to make life into a mechanically operated thing, the still small voice of the poet rises always supreme — supreme in wisdom, supreme in insight, the seer, the prophet, the philosopher; when all else has passed he remains, for beauty is the only permanence. To eliminate beauty from education is to destroy its very soul.

From the law of gravity to Shelley's "To a Skylark," beauty is the central element. In physics, in mathematics, in astronomy, in chemistry, there is the same perfection of order and sequence, the same correlation of forces, the same attraction of matter which, operating in the fine arts, brings about what we call "painting," "sculpture," "poetry," and "music." The whole of nature is a postulate of this doctrine, and there is no subject taught from kindergarten to college which may not be taught as in accord with it. There is a rhythm of beauty

in all things animate and inanimate — an endless variety around a central unity. The individuality in nature and in human life is as a rhythmic diversity to a divine and central unity. The leaves of a maple tree are all alike and all different; the difference between the mechanical arts and the fine arts is a difference of rhythmic flexibility: one is fixed in rhythm in accordance with physical laws, and acts in perfect sequence and regularity; the other is a free individualized rhythmic play around a fixed center. The painter may not dispose the objects on his canvas as he pleases — nature allows him only a certain freedom; the sculptor may distribute his weights and his rhythms around the axis with only so much freedom from the demands of nature as his particular purpose justifies; even the strain of music, which seems to wander so much at will that it is often called a "rhapsody,"—it, too, is merely a play of rhythms and contours around a fixed center, and conforms to a common purpose just as a maple leaf does. A machine acts in mechanical synthesis, a melody acts in æsthetic synthesis; neither is free. So we say there is no such thing as an isolated fact, or subject, or idea.

Thus everything taught to children can be taught as beauty, and if it is not so taught, its very essence must dissolve and disappear. "The mean distance from the earth to the moon is about two hundred and forty thousand miles"; "two and two make four"; "an island is a body of land entirely surrounded by water"; — so a child learns his lesson in what are called facts (the most deceptive and soulless things in the world). To him "the moon" and "a mile" are little more than words; 2 + 2 are troublesome hieroglyphics; "an island" is, perhaps, merely a word in a physical geography book; but to you all these objects and quantities are, perhaps, beautiful; for you

> "The moon doth with delight
> Look around her when the heavens are bare";

for you numbers have come to have that significance which makes them beautiful; an island may have touched your imagination as it has Conrad's, who calls it "a great ship anchored in the open sea"; you have seen that beauty which lies behind facts when they fall, as with a click, into the mechanism of things. So must children be taught to realize at the very begin-

ning something of that great unity which pervades the world of thought and of matter. Some comprehension must be given to them of that marvelous sense of fitting together, of perfect correspondence, which all nature reveals and which is ultimately beauty. It is this quality, residing in every subject, which constitutes the justification for our insistence on beauty as a part of education.

With our present systems of education all ideality is crushed, for this ideality is a personal quality, whereas all we are, we are in mass. "You are trying to make that boy into another you," said Emerson, some fifty years ago; "one's enough." Modern education, subject to constant whims, has become a capacious maw into which our children are thrown. Everything for use, nothing for beauty; for use means money, while beauty — what is beauty good for? — (a question which Lowell, in one of his essays, says "would be death to the rose and be answered triumphantly by the cabbage"). This is indeed an old thesis, but never has it more needed stating than now. It applies everywhere. Literature taught as beauty is uplifting and joyful; taught as syntax it is dead

and cheerless. All other forms of instruction lose their force if they are detached from that poetic harmony of which they are a part. Numbers, cities, machines, symphonies, the objects on your table, you yourself, — all these are to be seen as belonging to this harmony, without which the world is Bedlam.

American children are musical, American adults are not, and the chief reason lies in the wasted opportunities of childhood. If the natural taste of our children for music were properly developed, they would continue to practice it and to find pleasure in doing so, and thus would avoid the fatal error of *postponing their heaven to another time* — the great mistake of life and of theology.

I desire therefore to deal here with the possibilities which music offers to children, not to a few children in playing the pianoforte, but to all children in love and understanding. It is obviously desirable to make them all love music, and, since few of them ever attain satisfactory proficiency in playing instruments, our chief problem lies in trying to develop their taste and thereby keeping their allegiance.

II. THE VALUE OF SINGING

In the first chapter I discussed the qualities and properties of music as such — music, that is, in its pure estate, unconnected with words as in songs, or with words, action, costume, and scenery, as in opera. And now, in writing about children's music, it is still necessary to keep in mind that, even when music is allied to words, it has the necessities of its own nature to fulfill, and that the use of suitable or even fine words in a child's song does not change this condition.

In beginning this discussion I propose to ignore for the moment the effect in after life of what we advocate for children, and I also discard (with a certain contempt) the common notion — true enough in its way — that music is for them a rest and a change after burdensome tasks. For we must see music, in relation to children, as it really is. I go behind the psychologist[1] who says, ". . . the prime end of musical education . . . is to train the sentiments, to make children feel nature, religion, country, home, duty, . . . to guarantee sanity of the heart out of which are the issues of

[1] G. Stanley Hall.

life"; for I say that music, by itself, cannot make children feel nature, religion, country, home, or duty, and that these sentiments are aroused by the heightened effect of words set to music, and not by the music itself. The prime end of music — and of the other arts — is beauty. Song is not story, melodies have nothing to do with morals, and all the theories about music — such as those of Darwin and Spencer — are wrong when they attribute to it any ulterior purpose or origin whatever. Music is an end, not a means.

Now this beauty which the soul of man craves, and always has craved, cannot be brought to little children in literary form, because they cannot read or because their knowledge of words is too limited; nor can it be brought to them in the form of painting, because they are not sufficiently sensitive to color-vibrations; nor of sculpture, for their sense of form is not sufficiently developed. In fact, their power of response is exceedingly limited in most directions. They can neither draw nor paint nor write nor read, so that this beauty which we value so highly seems shut out from them. This were so but for music.

By singing, and by singing only, a little child of five may come in contact with a pure and perfect form of beauty. Not only that, but the child can reproduce this beauty entirely unaided, and in the process of doing so its whole being — body, mind, heart, and soul — is engaged. The song, for the moment, is the child. There is no possible realization of the little personality comparable to this. Here, in sounds, is that correlation of impulses in which the stars move; here is the world of order and beauty in miniature; here is a microcosm of life; here is a talisman against the cold, unmeaning facts which are driven into children's brains to jostle one another in unfriendly companionship. Through this they can feel a beauty and order which their minds are incapable of grasping. The joy which a child gets in reproducing beautiful melodies is like no other experience in life. It is absolutely a personal act, for the music lends itself to the child's individuality as nothing else does. Music, in this sense, preserves in children that ideality which is one of the most precious possessions of childhood, and which we would fain keep in after life; which loves flowers and animals,

which sees the truth in fairy stories, which believes everything to be good and is alien to everything sinister, which sees the moon and stars, not as objects so many millions of miles from the earth, and parts of a great solar system, but as lanterns hung in the heavens.

The prime object, then, of musical education for children is so to develop their musical sensibilities as to make them love and understand the best music. Does this bring up the question, "What is the best music?" By the "best" music I mean exactly what I should mean if I were to substitute the word "literature" for "music" — I mean the compositions of the great masters. And if you say that the great masters did not write music suitable for little children, I reply that such music has nevertheless been produced by all races *in their childhood*, that it exists in profusion, that it is commonly known as "folk-song," that it is the basis upon which much of the greatest music in the world rests, and, finally, that it is the natural and, indeed, the inevitable means of approach to such great music.

This basis, to which I refer, is both actual and ideal. Many great composers have used

actual folk-melodies. The chorales in Bach's "St. Matthew Passion," for example, are based on traditional melodies. In Haydn's instrumental compositions folk-songs are often used *verbatim*, and the total number of them to be found in his works is very great. Notable examples may be found in Beethoven — as in the "Rasoumoffsky" quartettes, and the Seventh Symphony — while Schubert, Brahms, and Tschaikovsky used folk-melodies freely. Dvořâk and Grieg are essentially national in their idiom and style, and folk-music may be said to be the basis of the music of each. Ideally the debt of music to folk-song is greater still. Any typical, *Adagio* of Beethoven (such as that in the so-called "Pathétique Sonata") springs from folk-song, and, in spite of the long process of development through which music had passed, reflects — in a more mature form — the same sentiment one finds in the original. How could it be otherwise? Is there any art, or any other intellectual activity of man, of which the same thing cannot be said? Were not Keats and Shelley waiting to be born of Coleridge and Wordsworth? Is there such a thing as a fruit without a vine; a blos-

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som without a stem; an end without a beginning? There have been composers, poets, and painters who have lived detached from the common consciousness — like those strange organisms in nature that float in sea or air and draw nothing from the earth's native soil; but all the greatest minds have been rooted in the past and have drawn their inspiration from common human experience. Keeping in mind, then, that our object is to train the taste of children so that they will love the best music, let us examine what is actually taking place in the teaching of music to children.

III. CURRENT METHODS OF TEACHING

The most common fallacy in our teaching consists in putting knowledge before experience, or theory before practice. Children are taught *about* music before they have had sufficient experience of it. They are taught, for example, to pin pasteboard notes on a make-belief staff; they are told that one note is the father-note and another the mother-note (one supposes the chromatics to be irascible old-maid aunts); all sorts of subterfuges are resorted to in an attempt to teach them what

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they are too young to learn and what, in any case, can have no significance whatever except when based on a long process of actual experience. One might as well try to satisfy a hungry child with a picture of an apple as to show a child notes before it has dealt with sounds.

This, then, is our great fallacy. It is impossible to expect children to be musical if they begin with symbols of any kind. Furthermore, in the teaching of songs without notation, the whole stress can be laid on fundamental things. What are these? First, a sense of rhythm. In the development of music rhythm came before melody, as melody came before harmony. Rhythmic freedom and accuracy are essential, not only to a child's musical education, but to his physical well-being. Now there is one thing certain,—namely, that freedom and accuracy in rhythm can be brought about only by actual bodily movement. (It is unnecessary to dwell on the fundamental difference between actual rhythmic movement and any symbol of it, such as a half or quarter note.) And the beginning of the musical training of children should consist in marching, or clapping hands to music played by the teacher. Following this

the *actual notes* of simple folk-song may be expressed in bodily motion — as in running or dancing — the chief point being to engage the whole body. The beginnings of *Eurhythmics* as evolved by Dalcroze serve this purpose excellently, the meter of the song ($\frac{4}{4}$ or $\frac{3}{4}$) being expressed with the arms, while, at the same time, the rhythms (or actual notes) are expressed by the movement of the feet with the body in motion. It must always be kept in mind, however, that this training is for the mind and the æsthetic sense, and that the bodily motions are for the purpose of giving children an exact sense of rhythm. Too great stress cannot be laid on the necessity of always using good music. Furthermore, I wish to avoid the pitfalls that are spread at every hand in the form of schools for *self-expression* in which children and adults are taught so-called "æsthetic" movements to music. Æsthetic dancing is one thing; a musical education is another. The cry for self-expression is characteristic of our attitude toward education. A child or an adult is asked to listen to a piece of music and then to express in motion or pose what *it feels*. Undisciplined by experience, incapable — as

we all are — of fathoming the mystery of great music, uneducated in those immutable laws that underlie all æsthetics, what can such a person express — save that idiosyncrasy which he at that moment is? So, ultimately, one expresses a Beethoven sonata or symphony by poses and movements — in a Greek dress, against a curtained background and under a calcium light! This delicate, transitory, elusive, and impenetrable thing we call music is something more than motion; yes, more even than motion, melody, and harmony together, for they are but its body; its spirit can neither be fathomed nor expressed save in terms of itself.

On every side this sort of instruction goes on. One hears glib statements on the lips of uninstructed persons about child psychology, "second" brain, and so forth. A pupil is asked to listen to a phrase of music and then tell the teacher what "comes through." We must remember that art is discipline and that there is no real liberty except under law. We want children to use their minds accurately and to have control of their bodies, but this use and this control can only come through definite

and regulated effort. Gropings in the dark, detached and illusive pursuits of the will-o'-the-wisps of education will never accomplish our purpose.

IV. WHAT SHOULD CHILDREN SING?

But even these artificial and false methods are less harmful to children than are the poor, vapid, and false songs by means of which their taste is slowly and surely disintegrated. Now the nature of music is such that many people are unable to see why one child's song is better than another. There is a considerable number of people having to do with children's music who seem quite incapable of distinguishing between a really beautiful folk-song and a trivial copy of one. Long association with the latter has produced the inevitable result. Only one argument can be brought to bear on such persons, an argument having nothing to do with æsthetics — namely, that the current music for children of one generation is inevitably displaced by that of the next, whereas the same folk-songs are continually reproduced, and are sung by increasing generations of children the world over. Any musician can string together

in logical sequence a series of notes to fit a verse of simple poetry — almost every musician has; any poet can put together simple and easily understood verses; but the hand of time sweeps them away to oblivion. Out of the depths of simple hearts, in joy or sorrow or privation, as a balm to toil and labor, as a cry from a mother's heart, in battle, in moments of religious exaltation — wherever and whenever the depths are stirred, song springs forth. A composer can express only what is in him; his limitations are as confining as are those of every other artist. Dickens could no more create a Clara Middleton than could Tschaikovsky a theme like that at the opening of the Ninth Symphony; and to suppose that the creation of a child's song is a simple matter of putting notes together in a correct and agreeable sequence, is to misconceive the whole creative process.

It is our cardinal error that we think any tune good enough which is attractive at first hearing. In the music-books provided for kindergarten and for home singing there is an endless series of poor, vapid, over-sweet melodies which children, hungry for any music,

will sing readily enough for lack of better. Some of these tunes smack unmistakably of a Broadway musical comedy; many of them are full of mawkish sentiment and affected simplicity. No real progress can be made until we reach definite conclusions on this point and act on them. Our taste and that of our children is never stationary, — we continually advance or go backwards, — and the subtle disintegration of the taste of children by bad songs results inevitably in indifference to good music in later life. The road branches here; one leads the way we know too well, the other leads to a real love of fine music, to a real happiness in it, and to a real respect for it. Let me say, also, that children love good songs, and that, as a part of their natural or normal endowment, they possess in this respect, and to a remarkable degree, that quality which we ignobly call "taste." (I recall an old Egyptian manuscript in the Bodleian Library containing a letter which ran thus: "Theon to his father, Theon — Greeting. It was a fine thing that you did not take me to Alexandria with you. Send me a lyre, I implore you! If you don't, I won't eat anything. I won't drink anything. There!")

The number of musical nostrums for children is legion, and I have no desire to enumerate them. Their effects are in inverse relation to their extensive and — sometimes — expensive paraphernalia. But I will quote a single sentence from a popular song-book for children as an illustration of the tendency which they represent: "Understanding as we do the innate fondness of children for rich harmonies, we have given special attention to the harmonization of the melodies; and although it is occasionally necessary for children to sing without accompaniment, yet such a lack is to be deplored, as the accompaniment often serves as the rhythmic expression of the thought."

The foregoing specimen is almost a compendium of what children's songs and the teaching of them should not be. If children are fond of "rich" harmonies, the fact is to be regretted. (I do not believe that the average child is.) The best possible thing for them, in that case, would be to hear no harmonies at all for some time, but to sing entirely unaccompanied (just as you would deprive them of sweetmeats if they had been made ill by

them); special attention given to the harmonization of children's songs is given in an entire misconception of their character and their uses; for the essence of a child's song lies in its own rhythmic and melodic independence, and if it depends on an accompaniment for its rhythm, it is by just so much a poor song. There is no harm in a simple accompaniment to a folk-song, but in teaching them to children an accompaniment does for them precisely what we want them to do for themselves, namely, reproduce correctly the metre and the rhythm, the pitch and the contour of the melody.

Such training as I have advocated, if carried on through early childhood, brings with it a natural desire to continue singing and makes learning to sing from notes much easier than it would otherwise be. The capacity to sing music at sight is a valuable acquisition for children, for it enables them to take part in choral singing and provides them in after years with a delightful means of access to some of the finest music. The advantage to the individual of this acquired technique is that it is of the mind and not of the muscles; it does not

desert its possessor as finger technique deserts the player who ceases to practice. To sing part songs with friends, or to be one of a larger number singing a composition by Bach or some other great composer, in which each singer is contributing to reproduce a noble work of art — this, in itself, is a highly desirable experience. But the process of learning to sing at sight has sometimes led far away from true æsthetics and has resulted in a certain debasing of the taste through singing inferior music. Vocal exercises for sight singing are necessary, and we can accept them as such, for they do not evoke the æsthetic sense; but bad songs taught to illustrate some point of technique are unnecessary and inexcusable.

V. THE FALLACY OF THE INEVITABLE PIANOFORTE LESSON

But the majority of the children who have private instruction in music take lessons in pianoforte-playing. It has become a custom; the pianoforte is an article of domestic furniture (and a very ugly one); pianoforte-playing is a sort of polish to a cursory education. But the reason is chiefly found in the fact that this

is the line of least resistance: there are plenty of teachers of pianoforte-playing but few teachers of music, so parents accept that which is available.

There is here a confusion between performing music and understanding it. Learning to perform seems (and is) a tangible asset — something definitely accomplished; while merely learning to understand music seems to parents a vague process likely to have somewhat indefinite results. They want their children to produce tangible results in the form of "pieces" well played. Here again we find the same misconception. Music in this sense is half titillation of the ear, and half finger-gymnastics. Such music instruction consists in finding the right key, black or white, holding the hand in a correct position, — patented and exploited as the only correct method, — putting the thumb under, and finally, after going through an almost endless series of evolutions covering many years and carried on at fearful cost of patience to every one within hearing, in dashing about over the glittering keys with an abandonment of dexterity positively bewildering. Nine tenths of the aspirants, however,

fall by the wayside and some time later look back grimly on a long procession of endless hours almost wasted. One pictures to one's self a little girl of seven or eight seated before that ponderous and portentous mass of iron, steel, wood, wires, and hammers which we call a "pianoforte" (sixty pounds of tender, delicate humanity trying to express itself through a solid ton), her legs dangling uncomfortably in space, her little fingers trying painfully to find the right key, and at the same time to keep in a correct position, struggling hard the while to relate together two strange things, a curious black dot on a page and an ivory key two feet below it, for neither of which she feels much affection. And then one pictures to one's self the same child at its mother's knee, or with other children, singing with joy and delight a beautiful song.

I do not advocate the abolishment of pianoforte-teaching to children, but I do advocate the exercise of some discrimination in regard to it, and particularly I insist that it should not be begun until the child has sung beautiful songs for several years and has developed thereby its musical instincts, — and even then

only when a child possesses a certain amount of that physical coördination which is absolutely essential to playing the pianoforte. For pianoforte-playing is by no means a sure method of developing the musical instinct in children. In the first place it lacks the intimacy of singing, and in the second place the playing itself demands the greater part of a child's attention, so that often it hardly hears the music at all. Any method of teaching music is, of course, wrong which attempts to substitute technical dexterity for music itself.

The foregoing is not typical of the most intelligent instruction in pianoforte-playing, for there are many teachers who reason these matters out, and there are some parents who see them clearly enough to allow such teachers a reasonable latitude. But it is true of pianoforte-teaching in general, as doubtless almost every one of our readers has had some evidence. It is obvious that even a slight capacity to play the pianoforte is useful and delightful provided one plays with taste and understanding, for one gets from it a certain satisfaction which mere listening does not give. I deplore only an insistence upon playing as

the only means of approach to music; I question the wisdom of forcing children to play who are not qualified to do so; and I think playing should, in any case, be postponed until the musical faculties are awakened by singing.

It is doubtless the conventional and domestic character of the pianoforte that leads us to train our children to play upon it rather than upon the violin. The pianoforte is available for casual music, for accompaniments to songs, for dance music, and so forth. The violin is, perhaps, only useful to one person. But how much more intimate it is! Tucked under the chin it becomes almost a part of the player — as the sculls used to be to the Autocrat when he went rowing. The tones of the violin are *yours* and have to be evoked through your own patient effort; the pianoforte stands glistening and repellent, almost impervious to your personality. I would have children taught to play the violin, or violoncello in preference to the pianoforte, and I look forward to the time when we shall train our young people to play other orchestral instruments as well. This is being successfully done even now in the public

schools. My own observation leads me to believe that talent for pianoforte-playing is quite rare, and that the average child is more likely to be able to play the violin. What more delightful than a quiet evening of chamber music in a small room, young and old playing together? Each person has his own interesting part to play. Each expresses himself and at the same time conforms to the *ensemble*. This would be true self-expression under the best kind of discipline.

It is perhaps too much to expect to stem the tide of bad pianoforte music. Here, as elsewhere, the home influence counts for much. Is it not the duty of parents to satisfy themselves that the teacher of music is giving their children the best and nothing else? The teaching of music in this country has suffered enormously through being detached from the highest professional standards, and, on the other hand, the professional standard suffers in being disconnected from the common life and thought. In other words, anybody who plays the pianoforte a little can set up in business as a teacher, while, at the same time, the highly qualified professional teacher often for-

gets that he is dealing with a human being who wants to understand music and whose happiness in dealing with it must ultimately depend on that understanding.

When children show an aptitude for playing the pianoforte there exists still the important question of developing their taste. Playing loses much of its value if there is any lack of musical taste and judgment on the part of the teacher. An examination of the programmes of what are called "pupils' recitals" will reveal how lax some teachers are in this respect. There is no excuse whatever for giving children poor music to play, for there is plenty of good music to be had and they can be taught to like it — *but the teacher must like it also.* Children are quick to discover a pretense of liking, and it is difficult to stimulate in them a love for something which you do not love yourself.

VI. THE REAL GOAL

These questions now inevitably arise: "How can children be taught music itself?" "By what process is it possible for them to become musical?" Obviously through personal expe-

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rience and contact with good music, and with good music only, first by singing beautiful songs to train the ear and awaken the taste, second by learning how to listen intelligently, and third (if qualified to do so) by learning to play good music on some instrument. Intelligent listening to music is obviously such listening as comprises a complete absorption of all the elements in the music itself. It is not enough to enjoy the "tune" alone, for melody is only one means of expression. The listener must be alive to metric and rhythmic forms, to melodies combined in what is called "counterpoint," to that disposition of the various themes, harmonies, and so forth, which constitutes form in music. The groups of fives, for example, which persist throughout the second movement of Tschaikovsky's "Pathétique Symphony" constitute its salient quality; the steady, solemn tread in the rhythm of the slow movement of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony defines the character of that piece; the weaving of the separate, individual parts in a composition by Bach is his chief means of expression, and his music is unintelligible to many people because they are incapable of answering to so

complex an idiom; the latitude in melody itself is, also, very great, and one needs constant experience of the melodic line before one can see the beauty in the more profound melodies of Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms.

What we are seeking to do is to make ourselves complementary to the music. We need to see that æsthetic pleasure is not by any means entirely of the senses, but rather of the imagination through training of the feelings and the mind. We want our listeners to assimilate all the elements in a piece of music and then to re-create it in the imagination. It is the office of art to create beauty in such perfect form as shall make us reflect upon it.

This principle applies, of course, to the appreciation of any artistic object whatsoever. One cannot appreciate Whistler's portrait of his mother by merely realizing that the subject looks like a typical Victorian dame, any more than one can appreciate Whitman's "To the Man-of-War-Bird" by locating Senegal. Whistler's idea is expressed through composition, drawing, and color, and each of these qualities has a subtlety of its own; the pose of the figure is a thing of beauty in itself; the

edge of the picture-frame just showing on the wall, the arrangement of curves and spots on the curtain, the tone of the whole canvas — all these make the picture what it is, and all these we must comprehend and take delight in. Whitman's poem is a thing of space and freedom; the sky is the wild bird's cradle, man is "a speck, a point on the world's floating vast"; the poet's imagination ranges through the whole created universe and flashes back over vast reaches of time as if to incarnate again man in the bird. So this music, which reaches our consciousness through rhythms, melodies, and harmonies, through form and style, through the delicate filigree of violins, or the triumphant blare of horns; which says unutterable things by means of silence; which means nothing and yet means everything, — this Ariel of the arts, — this, in all its quality, must find echo within us.

Observation, discrimination, reflection; cultivating the memory for musical phrases and melodies, disciplining the senses, enlarging the scope of the imagination, nurturing the sense of beauty — these are the means and the objects of musical education for children. By

such a process we attain in some measure to that joy which is one of the chief objects of art, and of which our present situation almost completely deprives us.

So let me say finally that I wage war here against patent nostrums, against enforced and joyless music-teaching, against the development of technical proficiency without taste or understanding; and that I uphold here a process of musical education which has for its object "being musical," and which takes into its fold every child, boy or girl, and keeps them there as man and woman.

CHAPTER III

PUBLIC SCHOOL MUSIC

I. IDEALS OF PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATION

It is characteristic of our compliance in matters educational that of late years we have seen subject after subject added to the curricula of our public schools, and have cheerfully voted money for them, without having much conception of their value or of the results attained by introducing them. Education is our shibboleth, our formula. The school diploma and the college degree constitute our new baptism of conformity. We do not question their authority or their efficacy. They absolve us. Our public schools have become experimental stations for the testing of theories, until the demand for more and more specialization has resulted in an overcrowding of the curricula and a consequent superficiality in the teaching. "That any man should die ignorant who is capable of knowledge, that I call a tragedy," says Carlyle. But there is a greater tragedy still, which is that our capability for knowl-

edge may be so overburdened by irrelevant information that it becomes worthless to us. We study everything and we know nothing. Our schools become detached from the realities of life because we pursue so diligently the semblance of those realities.

Our objective is definitely practical. We expect education to fit boys and girls to cope successfully with the everyday affairs of life, we frown on anything that savors of the unpractical, and we instinctively distrust the word "beauty." We are like Mime who thought that courage lay in the sword itself. We, too, have the pieces of the broken blade, and they are as useless to us as they were to him. Of what avail all this information which we so slowly and painfully acquire? Can it be put together Mime-fashion? Or is there something that can fuse it? Has it not all a common source, and is not that source in nature? "Every object has its roots in central nature and may be exhibited to us so as to represent the world." This unity in things, to which Emerson refers, gives order and sequence to all objects, persons, and ideas; they become significant and potent, for we see them as they really are. No

one can be said to be educated who fails to apprehend that unification of all matter, of all thought, of all sensation — that harmony in things which brings into relation a speck of dust and a star, the individual and the cosmos. The very thing we fear most in education is the one thing that tempers all the others — namely, beauty. For in education, as in everything else, beauty means sequence, order, and harmony; beauty relates things to each other, multiplies arithmetic by geography, objects by sounds, acts by feelings. If there were a world with one human being in it, and only one, his sweetest, gentlest, and most inevitably perfect act would be to leap into the mother sea and rejoin nature. An isolated fact or an unrelated piece of information only differs in this respect from the human being in that it never was alive.

We pay lip service to beauty. We study poetry, but we deal chiefly with poets — with their being born and their dying, with the shell of them, whereas the poet is only valuable for what beauty he brings us. We even try to extract morals from him, or to find in him codes of conduct, philosophies, and the

like, forgetting Swinburne's fine saying that "There are pulpits enough for all preachers in prose; the business of verse writing is hardly to express convictions; and if some poetry, not without merit of its kind, has at times dealt with dogmatic morality, it is all the worse and all the weaker for that." One of the prime objects of the study of English should be to instill in the student a love of English poetry. But we are afraid of it; we distrust it, or we think it effeminate. (It means nothing that we are now praising "free verse," for we are only interested in the first half of the term, and that is not applicable to poetry, since no verse worth having ever has been or can be free. We nibble.)

But poetry does, at least, express itself in words, and words can be punctuated, and spelled, and parsed and scanned, and, above all, words provide material for examinations. You cannot do any of these things with music, for it consists in mere sounds meaning nothing that any one can find out. We do allow music to enter a corner of our educational sanctuary, and then we slam the door on her and leave her there until June when we expect

her to come forth garlanded for the graduation exercises. The taxpayer attends these exercises and listens to the singing of the children in that complacent mood which he commonly assumes when he thinks he is getting his money's worth, although he very likely knows that his own public school education in music did nothing whatever for him.

What are the claims of music as a means of educating the young? To some educational administrators it seems to have almost no justification. "What can be accomplished by it?" they ask. "Singing is not necessary as a factor in life." "Music is of little importance in a work-a-day world." So argue the school men who want "results" as they call them. But the real object of education should be first to make human beings capable of hearing and seeing intelligently, and of using their hands skillfully, and then to train the mind so that it can receive and assimilate knowledge and turn it into wisdom. There are a few school authorities who see music as an important part of such education, but most of them — being in themselves unconscious of its power and of its value — only accept it because other

people similarly placed have done so, or as a relief from other studies, or as a means of enlivening public school exhibitions. That there is something in our natures which music fulfills and satisfies; that great men have given expression to their ideas through it; that the understanding and appreciation of their utterances depends on the training of the ear and of the imagination, and that, when this training has been completed, a man or woman has access to a whole world of beauty — all this the average school man does not see. Nor can he be expected to see it, for he has never experienced it in himself. But he should be convinced by the phenomena; by the large number of people who derive enjoyment and stimulation from great music; by the persistence of the love for it; even, perhaps, by the colossal sums spent on it. But he cannot dispel his distrust of a study whose results are illusive; he often sees it badly administered, and is unable to remedy the condition, so he leaves it to its fate. The one medium of human expression that is universal, that transcends language, that knows no distinctions save such as it seeks out itself in our own

souls; that speaks to the tiniest child and to his grandfather in common terms; that does *not* deal in beliefs, or in dogma, or in events, or things, or persons, or localities — this he suspects! Put all this on his educational scales; a few lessons in arithmetic will outweigh it. The passion for categorical facts, arranged in methodical sequence term by term, year by year, and culminating in a sky-rocket burst, every fact blazing up separately for an instant as though it really were alive, and then going out while the charred embers fall far apart on a patient earth — this is called Education! But this passion is almost ineradicable — is, indeed, one of the most common of human failings. It is what is called in these days "efficiency": that is, a sort of nose-on-the-grindstone persistency in detail entirely oblivious of those larger aspects of any case which really decide its destiny. Systems, categories, precedents; these are safe. Why wander from beaten paths? Individual aspiration, a desire for beauty — these are dangerous. We have ceased memorizing the names of rivers, or the capitals of Patagonia and Bolivia, but we still cling tightly to "useful" subjects, and

we still test our education by weighing it in June.

I propose, then, first, to examine the claims of music as a subject to be taught in our public schools; second, to examine into prevailing methods of teaching it; third, to investigate the results now obtained; and finally, to suggest ways of bettering our situation.

II. THE VALUE OF MUSIC IN PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATION

In the last chapter I referred to the qualities in music which make it especially valuable for children, and what I said there applies with equal or even greater force here. Any one who has compared town or city life in this country and in Europe, and has seen what a pleasure, and what a civilizing influence music may become when it is properly taught in childhood, must realize how great a loss our people sustain by the neglect of singing. We are only now beginning to realize how long it takes to weld a diverse people into one by means of an intellectual conception of nationality. The thin bond of self-interest, the advantage of "getting on" in

the world — these keep us together in ordinary times, but in a great crisis these bonds break. The leaven of sentiment is needed. We want a common sympathy; we want above all some means of expression for that sympathy. There have been of late numerous great meetings at which the feelings of men and women have expended themselves in shouts, in cheers, in the clapping of hands, and in other inarticulate methods of expressing emotions. What would not a song have done for these thousands — a song they all knew and loved? Are we forever to be dumb?

Our hope is in the children, to whom music is of inestimable value. In the first place (as I have already pointed out) music supplies the only means of bringing young children into actual and intimate contact with beauty. In the kindergarten or in the early grades of our public schools children are capable of singing, and love to sing, simple songs which, within their limited scope, are quite perfect, whereas their capacity for drawing, or for appreciating forms and colors is comparatively slight. In music children find a natural means of expression for that inherent quality of idealism which

is a part of their nature. When children sing together their natures are disciplined while each child at the same time expresses its own individuality. Activity of ear, eye, and mind together tends to cultivate quickness of decision and accuracy of thinking. In the matter of rhythmic coördination alone music justifies itself. Rhythmic movements to music have long since come to be recognized as a means of mental and physical development. All sorts of interesting and stimulating exercises can be used in connection with the teaching of songs to little children, and any one who has ever watched a child's development through intelligent instruction in singing and in rhythmic exercises must have realized how keen its perception becomes and how valuable to its general intelligence the training is. So important is training in rhythmic movement that it should be a part, not only of all musical education, but of all primary education everywhere.

Singing beautiful songs prepares children by the best possible means for an intelligent understanding of the compositions of the great masters which, for lack of this preparation,

many adults never comprehend. The educational administrator who denies a great composer the distinction he gives to a great writer is going against the testimony of generations of cultivated and educated people all over the world, and, moreover, is tacitly acknowledging that he believes greatness to be a matter of mere outward expression. The element in Shakespeare's writings, for example, which reveals his greatness is the same element that reveals Beethoven's — namely, an imaginative, beautiful and true concept or idea of human life. Beethoven is as true as Shakespeare. The same fancy, the same daring, the same grandeur, the same extravagance of imagination, and the same fidelity to life are found in each. That one uses words and the other mere sounds affects the case not at all, or if at all, in favor of music, since these elements or qualities of life are expressed more directly and more intensely in music than in words.

Yes, there is every reason for giving music a real place in the curriculum save one, and that is this: you cannot give an examination in it. Fatal defect! No A + or A – for the child to take home proudly to its parents;

on a certain day at a certain hour you cannot find out by a set test what, of the beautiful thing we call music, a child has in its heart and soul. The result you hope to gain consists chiefly in a love of good music, and a joy in singing it — a result that is likely to affect the happiness of the child all its life long; the whole tendency of singing in schools has been to civilize the child, to make it happy, and to help its physical and mental coördination; yet you deny the value of such training, you refuse to give it a real place in your curriculum, you call it a fad or a frill. What an extraordinary attitude for an educational administration to assume! The world is, then, merely a place of eating and drinking, of mechanical routine, of facts. There are to be no dreams; the flowers and brooks and mountains, the sky, birds' songs and the whole fantasy of life — these are nothing. Beautiful objects in which the eye delights, beautiful sounds that fill the soul with happiness and create for us a perfect world of our own, these are useless because they won't submit to an examination in June and can't be made to figure in a diploma. How many young people, I wonder,

graduate from our institutions of learning with nothing *but* a diploma? Would it not be of great value to the children if they were taught to see and to hear vividly and intelligently, to be alive to all beautiful objects, to love a few beautiful poems, to have the beginnings of a taste for literature, to be able to sing fine songs, to take part in choral singing, and to know well a few pieces by Mozart or Schubert? Do not all great things establish relationship and do not all little things accentuate differences? What education is better than that which unifies the individual with the universal? Is not this whole world of fine literature, painting, sculpture, and music in the very highest sense, then, an education to the individual?

We march in endless file along a hard-paved way out of the sun, our goal a place where *use* holds sway. To reach the goal and begin our labors under the lash, catching a glimpse only now and then of stars, of flowers, of brooks, of green fields — only a glimpse, for *use* holds us fast. After a time we forget them altogether as *use* fastens its grip upon us more securely. We plod onward, machine-like, until all sense

of beauty is dead, and the world is a treadmill of money-getting and of trivial pleasures. Then our blindness reacts on our children. We have forgotten the impulse of our childhood. The love for beautiful things has left us, and we have no longer a sense of their value. Must our children continue to suffer for this? Must they, too, become the slaves of use?

III. FALSE METHODS OF TEACHING

That compliance of ours to which I have referred is nowhere more evident than in the large sums we spend on the teaching of music, and in our ignorance of the results. School boards and school superintendents usually possess little knowledge of the subject and have no means of knowing the quality and the effect of music teaching save by such evidences as are supplied by the singing of the children at the end of the school year. No one asks what the one thousand or the fifty thousand dollars spent by the school board earns. The money is appropriated and expended on salaries, music books, etc., and there the matter is left hanging, as it were, in the air, and not to be

heard from again until the end of the school year. No committee supervises the selection of the books or the methods of teaching. The supervisor is in autocratic control. The system is like an inverted pyramid propped up by an occasional show of singing, by the fallacious excuse that singing is a relaxation after burdensome tasks (fallacious because such relaxation by singing could be carried on without the expensive paraphernalia of a school music system), but most of all supported and fostered by the equally fallacious belief that reading music "at sight," so called, is an end in itself. So completely divorced is it from such control as is exercised over other subjects that it has become the prey of theorists who have accumulated around it a mass of pedagogical paraphernalia quite unknown in any other form of music teaching, and essentially artificial and encumbering.

I have attended conventions of teachers where all the interest centered in pedagogical methods, and in the discussions of artificial terms and theories. I have met teachers who say they discourage the children from singing — because it ruins their voices! and who con-

fine their instruction to the theory of music. The fetish of sight-singing has cast its blight over the teaching of little children so that instead of letting them sing by ear simple and beautiful songs, — which nearly every child loves to do, — they are taught at the age of five or six years the mysteries of intervals, etc. And since the time divisions of music present difficulties too great for their young minds, the vertical measure lines are discarded, thus obliterating the accents and taking away from music one of its most fundamental elements. This makes necessary the substitution of purely empirical terms to describe the time values of quarter notes, eighth notes, and so forth, such as "type one," "type two"; or artificial syllabic terms are piled up one upon another until such a monstrosity as *tafate-fetifi* results.

It is obvious that a long experience of music through singing should precede any instruction as to the time values of notes, and that if a child has sung many times by ear the sounds represented by these artificial terms, and has continued to sing by ear for two years or more, and has stored up a series of musical impres-

sions that have developed its musical taste and instinct, and has mastered the rudiments of numbers, the teaching of the notes becomes a much simpler and more natural process, involving no other terms than those ordinarily in use in music. You can then call a note by its generally accepted name — "half," "quarter," "eighth," etc.

How did this all come about? Primarily through the indifference of the public, and through the incapability of the school authorities to control the teaching. Never having been so educated in music as to realize that it contains the highest kind of educational possibilities, parents take little interest in the music their children learn in school. The connection between music and life is lost. The supervisor may, or may not be a good musician; he may be entirely indifferent to the higher possibilities of music as a factor in education; his taste may never have been properly formed. He is likely to be helpless even though he feels the need of reform because he needs music books, and has to take what he can buy. The making of music books for schools has become too much a matter of commercial competition, and

particularly of commercial propaganda, and this latter condition is fostered by the summer schools for supervisors controlled and operated by the publishers of school music books. The result of all this is that a cumbersome pedagogical system has become firmly entrenched in many American towns and cities.

One of the greatest difficulties connected with public school music teaching is the inability of some of the grade teachers to teach music. The daily lesson is given by her. The music teacher visits each room once in two, three, or even four weeks. It is not necessarily the grade teacher's fault if she cannot teach music well, because the training given her in the grade schools and normal school may have been quite inadequate. But teach music she must—as a part of her regular duties. My own observation leads me to believe that a good many grade teachers are capable of doing this work well, that few do it as well as they might do if they were given more training, and that some teach so badly that it results in more harm than good. In any case I am opposed to any transference of the daily lesson from the grade teachers to an expert, not because I think

the expert would not do it in some ways better, but because it would mean a very large increase in the expense of our schools and because I believe that only a few grade teachers are incapable under proper training of giving a satisfactory music lesson. Furthermore, I believe in keeping the music lesson as a bond of sympathy between the grade teacher and the children. Singing is an entirely natural art for any human being who begins it in childhood and pursues it through youth. I look forward to the day when we shall all sing. I object to the displacement of the grade teacher in the one function of school life which is intimate, free, and beautiful, in which facts, members, places, events, names are forgotten, and in which the spirit of each child issues forth *under the discipline of beauty*. (I place these words in italics because I am constantly being told that the great thing in the education of children is to give them self-expression; to which I reply that self-expression except under discipline — using the word in its larger sense — has never helped either the individual or the race.) We must look to the normal schools for this improvement in the ability

of our teachers to teach music, and the normal schools, in turn, must expect our high schools to send forth their graduates, properly taught in music, so that normal schools will not have to spend time (as they often do now) supplementing the imperfections of the earlier training.

At present we are moving in a vicious circle. Many of our normal schools still preserve something of that artificial pedagogy to which I have referred, and still send out teachers who are, *humanly speaking*, ill-fitted to lead the children in music. (I refer to the human element in the matter because it is impossible to teach music properly if you have not had experience with the best of it, and if you do not love the best more than any other. So long as our normal schools lay too great stress on the technique of teaching music at the expense of the greater thing, just so long will our schools suffer. And it is easily possible for the normal school authorities to be deceived as to what is the best music, as well as by a brave showing of musical performance.) The real failure in the administration of music is due to a false ideal. And it is in this mistaken ideal or pur-

pose that the crux of the whole matter lies. Nearly the whole stress of teaching is laid on expert sight-reading of music. Go into a school-room with a supervisor to hear his class sing and he will almost invariably exhibit to you with pride the capacity of the children to sing at sight. He will ask you to put something impromptu on the blackboard as a test of their proficiency. He will exhibit to you classes of very young children who have already learned to read notes and who can sing all sorts of simple exercises from the staff.

What is meant by the term "sight-singing"? It means, if it means anything, that a person shall be able to sing correctly at the first trial his part in any piece of vocal music which he has never seen or heard before. And this, which we spend our money for, is an entirely artificial attainment, since in real life we are almost never required to do it. "Sight-singing" has become a shibboleth. What we want is a reasonable capacity for reading music, for that is all we are called upon to do in actual life. In choral societies and choirs all over this country the number of singers who can read music at sight is negligible, and there is probably not

one of them who could master at once the intricacies of modern choral writing. Let us then teach children to read music by giving them as many trials as is necessary, and let them gradually acquire such a familiarity with intervals and with rhythmic figures as will make it possible for them to sing with other people, and enjoy doing so. We shall then get rid of an artificial ideal and have just so much more time in which to cultivate music for its own sake. It goes without saying that the vast majority of the children in our public schools never attain to that expertness which is the present objective of the teaching. So we have a double failure — in ideal and in practice. (This is not the place for a discussion of the various methods of teaching sight-singing. The method commonly used in this country is derived from English practice and we have ignored the much more accurate and scientific systems of France and Germany.)

The supervisor, who takes so much pride in the capacity of his pupils to sing at sight, ought to be chiefly interested in something much more important — namely, their ability to sing a beautiful piece of music and particu-

larly their joy in doing so, for that is the only real justification for his presence there. Many supervisors seem to have almost forgotten that music is a thing of beauty and that the only way to keep it alive in a child's heart is to teach the child to sing beautiful songs. Constant contact with inferior songs for children may, indeed, have so affected the supervisor's taste that he himself can no longer detect the difference between good and bad.

IV. GOOD OR BAD MUSIC?

For eight years, then, in our public schools children are taught — as far as may be — to sing at sight. Is there a fine song which presents a certain difficulty, it is placed in the book at the point where that difficulty arises, and is treated as a sight-reading test. It is subjected to analysis as to its melodic progressions, each of which is taken up as a technical problem. This is precisely the method so often and so fatally used in connection with poetry. The Skylark's wings are clipped; the Grecian Urn becomes an archæological specimen; the Eve of Saint Agnes a date in the almanac.

This brings me to the most important part of the whole matter. If expert sight-singing is not only a false ideal, but one impossible of general attainment in public schools under the conditions at present existing, what does justify our expenditure of such large sums of money? The sole justification for it is to bring children to love the best music, and so to train their taste for it as to make them capable of discriminating between good and bad. Now a thorough test of the children in the kindergarten or the lower primary grades of any public school anywhere will surely reveal that such children start life with the makings of good taste in music. Nature is prodigal here — prodigal and faithful. In the most remote villages in this country, in purely industrial communities, among the poor and among the rich (both having forgotten), children love good songs. It is their natural inheritance. No excess of materialism in the generations affects it in the least. This is the primitive endowment; deep down in human character there lies a harmony of adjustment with nature. Overlay it as you may with custom or habit; sully it with luxury; it still persists, for without it human

life cannot be. This idealistic basis of human life, which is never destroyed, appears fresh and unstained in children, and in their song it bubbles up as from a pure spring.[1]

It has been a matter of frequent comment that there has been no such increase in choral singing either in town or city as our public school music teaching should lead us to expect. In fact the countless young people who graduate from our schools seem to make almost no impression on choral singing. It still remains the least of our musical activities. It is as difficult as ever to secure people who care enough for the practice of singing to come to rehearsals. Voluntary choir singing, for the pleasure to be derived from it, is rare. Are not our public schools partly responsible for this condition? Is not that natural taste and love for good music, to which I have just referred, allowed to lapse and finally almost to disap-

[1] A certain small proportion of children are backward in music, but the possibility of teaching them to sing has long since been satisfactorily demonstrated. They need special attention which it is difficult to give in public schools. They should, I think, never be taken from their seats in the room and placed at one side, but should be asked to listen to the other children, and occasionally to sing with them, the teacher standing near for help and encouragement.

pear? And is not this largely the result of too much technical instruction, and too little good music? I know that there are many more distractions for children than formerly; I know that the home influence in music is slight, and that parents assume less responsibility for their children than they used to do. But, granting all this, the musical instruction in public schools does not fulfill its proper function, nor can it hope to do so until it changes its ideals.

There is no doubt whatever that, speaking generally, the best music with which to train the taste of young children is that known as "folk-song." The supposition that any musician is capable of composing a fine enduring song suitable for children is false in its very essence. The constant appearance of new songs for children and their inevitable disappearance in the next generation is evidence enough that this is so, apart from the unmistakable evidence in the songs themselves. In reality the good tune is right, the poor tune wrong; the good tune conforms to, is a part of nature; the poor tune is false in quantity and in sentiment, and not a part of nature. The

fine tune is straightforward, honest, and genuine in sentiment; the inferior tune professes to be so, but it is not. Fine simple tunes of the kind suitable for children to sing have been composed, — "Way Down upon the Suwanee River" is an example, — but they are very few in number. The only safeguard is to keep chiefly to the old melodies whose quality has been proved. And since the number of fine folk-tunes is more than sufficient for our purpose, and since most of them are not copyrighted, there would seem to be no reason whatever why they should not constitute the larger part of the music we give our children to sing in their early years of school life.

I have said that children like real tunes in preference to false ones. We have therefore a perfectly sound basis upon which to build. But it must not be forgotten that singing is in itself an agreeable pastime to children and that their taste can be lowered as well as raised. With their fundamental good taste to build on, we can be reasonably sure of accomplishing our purpose if we provide them all through their school life with the best music and no

other. This is not done and the failure of our school music to justify itself can be attributed chiefly to this.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the very place where it will do the most harm — namely, in the kindergarten. And this is true of kindergartens generally. In the process of providing very young children with suitable words for their songs — which in the kindergarten are considered of first importance — the effect of inferior music seems to have been entirely ignored. In other words, the one sense through which young children receive their most vivid impressions has been systematically and persistently violated. I have examined a great many song books used in American kindergartens and I have never found one that was really suitable for the purpose of training the musical taste of young children. Our craving for a complete pedagogical system is characteristic; it is our refuge, our bulwark. Instead of facing actual problems as they are, we take some ready-made system — which some other perplexed person has made for a shelter — and proceed to adopt it *in toto*. I mean by this that the custom of

kindergarten authorities is to buy a book in the open market — a book whose sole guarantee is that it is for sale. It probably contains inferior music, but the purchaser asks no questions. Now an enterprising and well-equipped teacher could gather together during a summer holiday twenty-five simple folk-songs, could have suitable words written for them, and could have them mimeographed (if more copies were needed), and put into use in her school. I say nothing of the benefit to her of doing this.

It is obvious, then, that our public school music labors under great difficulties. The classes are too large, — sometimes forty-five children in a room, — the music lesson period is too short; the music teacher visits each room at too great intervals; the grade teacher is perhaps not properly qualified to teach music and the head master's interest in it may be perfunctory. The study itself is, therefore, irregular, as must be the case when such conditions as these exist. Yet we are trying to produce *expert* results. Why not say to ourselves that since our population as a whole is not yet actively interested in the best music,

and since the children are unlikely to hear much of it outside the school, and since by nature and habit and association there is really nothing in our musical life to justify spending our money on teaching expert sight-singing to children — the undertaking being in a sense anomalous and detached; why not say to ourselves: "We must first of all teach our children to love the best music, and then we must train them to read it, not necessarily 'at sight,' but to read it well enough to satisfy all the demands likely to be made in that direction in after life."[1] I would sweep away half the pedagogical paraphernalia of our public school music teaching. I believe much more valuable results could be secured by constant contact with the best music, and continued observation of it, with a minimum of technical exercises. I believe the processes of music to have no significance whatever except as they appear in

[1] I do not mean by the foregoing that I consider a fair degree of expertness in reading music "at sight" an impossible attainment for children. What I have said has been entirely in reference to our public schools as they are at present constituted, and to the arrangements now made for the teaching of music. The teaching of sight-singing requires the services of an expert, more time than our schools now give, and a more scientific method than that now employed.

great compositions, and that constant contact with and observation of fine music is more valuable than the study of the rules by which it is made, or the technique by which it is produced. In music as in poetry we deduce the rules and laws from the artistic objects themselves. The composer and the poet are to us what nature is to them.

V. ATTEMPTS AT REFORM

I have drawn the foregoing conclusions from an extended observation and experience of public school music, and I ought to add — lest the record seem too despairing — that in a considerable number of places intelligent and open-minded men and women have been doing their best to stem the tide of inferior music and of artificial methods of teaching. During the last two years I have been serving on an unpaid advisory committee appointed by the School Committee of the City of Boston to improve the teaching of music in the public schools. The School Committee of Boston consists of five people elected by the people. They became aware of the inefficiency of the teaching through an independent investigation carried

on by Dr. A. T. Davison, of Harvard University (who is chairman of our committee), and they asked him to form a committee to help them. Boston was spending some forty thousand dollars for public school music. During one school year the members of our committee visited schools, taking note of what they heard and saw, and finally each member submitted a written report to the chairman. These were made the basis for a general report to the School Committee by whom it was accepted.

The Boston teaching was especially weak in dealing with rhythm, and for a perfectly simple reason. Rhythm was taught, not as action, which it is, but as symbol, which it is not. The various rhythmic figures were taught, in other words, through the mind instead of through the body. These rhythmic figures were given arbitrary names (to which I have already referred), and the children, looking at the symbols, were told the strange name given to them, and, sitting quite still, produced the required sounds. The teachers did not even beat the time. The usual answer we got when asking about rhythm was, "Oh, they feel the rhythm."

This may have been true, but, if it were, the children were extreme individualists! This sort of rhythmic teaching is common in the United States and the defect is a grave one. The arithmetical complications of rhythm in music should never be taught to little children at all. Just as they should sing the melody by imitating the teacher, so they should be taught the rhythm by imitating, *in action*, the time value of the notes. A child who has sung a simple folk-song many times, and has danced, or marched, or clapped his hands in exact time and rhythm with the notes, can be taught later the pitch names and the time names of those notes without the slightest difficulty and without any subterfuge whatever. In a schoolroom containing some forty children, and with the space largely occupied by desks and seats, it is, of course, impossible to carry on any extended exercises in rhythm. But every effort should be made to teach musical rhythms as action before they are taught as sounds. Whenever possible classes should be taken to the assembly room, where there is a sufficiently large open floor space for such exercises.

But the most distressing condition in the

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Boston schools — and this would be more or less true everywhere in our country — was that all the children in the kindergarten and primary grades were learning such songs as would eventually destroy their natural taste for fine music. This is the one great indictment against public school music in the United States — that it has been made to order for schoolbooks, and to fit technical problems, and that it consequently fails to keep the allegiance of children. Nothing but the best will ever do that, and until we supply the best our school music is bound to fail. Our committee, as a preliminary step toward reform, recommended that all instruction in reading music should be postponed until the last half of the third grade. This allowed us to institute singing by ear and at the same time to teach rhythm by beating time, clapping hands, marching, etc. A book of folk-songs was compiled by Dr. Davison and myself and was adopted and published [1] by the School Committee. The greatest difficulty here has been to get suitable verses for the simpler songs. We have spent much time

[1] Now published by the Boston Music Company, 26 West Street, Boston, Massachusetts.

over this one matter and have not, even then, always been successful. Good verses for very young children are difficult to secure, and — to instance how painstaking the process of making a book of such songs is — we have sometimes received half a dozen sets of verses for a simple melody without finding one that we thought suitable.

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It is perhaps too soon to draw very definite conclusions from the results of these reforms in the Boston schools. One thing is certain: a very large number of children five, six, and seven years of age are now singing really beautiful songs without seeing any music at all and without being told anything whatever about the notes, rests, intervals, etc., which occur in them. Upon the experience of these two and one half years of singing by ear we shall build up skill in singing by note and this skill will be acquired with much greater ease than would be otherwise possible. It is also worth noting that the expense of music books in these grades (and the same will be true of later grades) is more than cut in half. In the kindergarten and the first primary grades the children sing without a book; in the second and third grades

they use a simple and inexpensive book of words, while the teachers in these grades use the small collection of folk-songs already referred to.

In the Boston schools ninety minutes a week is given to drawing, and sixty minutes a week to music. It is obvious that a daily lesson in music twelve minutes long is entirely inadequate for proper instruction. An increase to twenty minutes a day, or to three half-hours a week is highly desirable. In many schools entirely too much time is devoted to preparing music for the graduation exercises. Failing an examination, what is there left but an exhibition?

It is a task of real difficulty to reform any strongly entrenched system or method of education. What is conclusively demonstrated as a more sensible method runs against self-interest, tradition, intellectual immovability (to use a moderate term !), and other even more violent opposition. The reforms we are instituting in Boston need the combined force of all the persons in authority, of all the teaching staff, and of public opinion. No one of these forces is being fully exerted owing to circum-

stances over which we have no control. But we have accomplished something, for we have reduced the expense and we have simplified the teaching; and each of these improvements was sadly needed.

VI. Other Activities in School Music

One of the encouraging signs of our advancement is in orchestral playing. School orchestras have become important features of school life, and the excellence of some of the orchestral playing is remarkable. It often outshines the singing, and it is frequently self-contained, being under the direction, not of the music teachers, but of the head master or one of his assistants. In this department of music teaching, as in the singing lessons, much depends on the attitude of the head master. In our Boston schools there are notable examples of fine music fostered and sustained by enthusiastic head masters who lay great stress on that as contrasted with mere technical expertness. Credit toward the high-school diploma is now given in Boston for study of the pianoforte or an orchestral instrument outside school hours and with independent teachers.

Lists are issued to indicate the standard of music and of performance for each grade, and certificates of hours of practice are required of parents. This system of credits depends for its success on securing competent examiners not otherwise connected with the schools, for by this means poor teachers are gradually eliminated. Many schoolrooms are provided with phonographs which may be a powerful factor in building up or in breaking down the taste of children. An approved list of records for the Boston schools is in course of preparation in order to eliminate undesirable music and to increase the usefulness of the instruments.

Singing by ear spontaneously and without technical instruction, but rather for the joy of doing it, and for the formation of the taste on good models, is the proper beginning of all musical education. Such experience, coupled with proper rhythmic exercises, constitutes a real basis, not only for sight-singing, but for performance on any instrument. No child should be admitted for possible credit in pianoforte playing or be allowed to enter violin classes until so prepared in singing and in rhythm. The pianoforte neither reveals nor

corrects the defective ear; the violin, on the other hand, does reveal it, though it does not necessarily correct it. Defective rhythm can be properly corrected only through actual rhythmic motions of the body.

Many high schools now offer courses in what is called "The Appreciation of Music." The success of such courses depends to a considerable extent on the quality of music used in the primary and grammar grades. If the children have been singing inferior music for eight years, the difficulties of teaching them to appreciate the best is correspondingly increased. If, on the contrary, their taste has been carefully formed on good models, the introduction to great music has already been made. In studying symphonies, for example, one would begin with Haydn whose symphonies and chamber music are largely based on folk-melodies. In short, courses in appreciation should be the culmination of the musical education of our young people. Such courses should have for their object, first and foremost, the cultivation of the musical memory, for this is an absolute essential to anybody who hopes to listen to music intelligently.

After this has been accomplished, the student should listen to simple instrumental pieces whose style and form should be explained, and the explanation should be as untechnical [1] as possible. Each of the properties or qualities of music is susceptible of treatment on the broad grounds of æsthetics, and one's success in teaching young people to understand it depends considerably on the ability so to present it. The instructor and an assistant should play on a pianoforte all the music studied, or, failing that, a mechanical piano-player should be used.

And now let me say that the most important and beneficial step any community could take toward improving its school music would be to secure a supervisor who is untainted by current American pedagogical theories of sight-singing, who will not attempt to teach little children something they cannot possibly understand, and who will use nothing but the best music from the kindergarten to the high

[1] Counterpoint, for example, is, strictly, note against note, two melodies parallel to each other; æsthetically, counterpoint consists in illuminating, illustrating, or developing, a phrase or theme by *parts* of *itself* — what in architecture would be described as making the ornament grow out of the structure.

school. No community is really helpless if it will bestir itself. If our public school music teaching were well devised and properly administered and if our children were taught to sing nothing but the best music, we might look forward to a time, not far distant, when a generation of music-lovers would take the place of the present generation of music-tasters. Our young people would gravitate naturally into choirs and singing societies. Groups of people would gather together to sing; families would sing together; there would be chamber music parties; we should pass many a quiet domestic evening at home listening to Mozart and Beethoven instead of playing bridge or going to a moving-picture theater. The whole body of American music would be affected by the influx of those young people who would want the best. In course of time, perhaps, — although one must not expect the millennium, — the vapid drawing-room song would disappear along with the tinkling pianoforte show-piece. 'Cellists would play something better than pieces by Popper; the thirteenth concerto by Viotti and the thirtieth Hungarian rhapsodie would be relegated to

that limbo where now repose (we hope in death) the "Battle of Prague" and "Monastery Bells." This cannot be brought about casually. We must set about it; and the place to begin is in our public schools.

CHAPTER IV

COMMUNITY MUSIC

I. MUSIC BY PROXY

In the preceding chapters I have dealt with special musical subjects, and have constantly referred to music as a distinct and independent art having its own reasons for existence. I have dealt, also, with some of its special functions as well as with its relation to the education of children. In the present chapter it is my purpose to discuss music in its relation to communities large and small, and this necessitates treating it on the broadest possible grounds.

By community music I mean, first, music in which all the people of a community take part; second, music which is produced by certain members of the community for the benefit and pleasure of the others; and third, music which, while actually performed by paid artists, is nevertheless somehow expressive of the will of the community as a whole. I shall take no refuge behind generalities or theories of æsthetics. I want to reach everybody, includ-

ing the person who says, "I don't know anything about music but I know what I like," and that other extraordinary person who says, "I know only two tunes, one of which is 'Yankee Doodle'"— each of these statements being quite incomprehensible, since it is a poor person indeed who does n't know what he likes, and anybody who knows "Yankee Doodle" has no excuse whatever for not knowing what the other tune is, or, so far as that goes, what any other tune is. I am, in short, appealing on common grounds about a common thing. My only question is this: If there is a means of interesting, delighting, and elevating a large number of people at very small expense, by something which they can all do together and which brings them all into sympathy with one another, and if the result of this coöperation is to produce something beautiful, is it not worth doing? I intend to make as full an answer to this question as space permits.

It is in the "doing" and the "doing together" that the crux of the matter lies, for a purely external connection with music never brings about a complete understanding of it. It is no exaggeration to say that our connection

with nearly all artistic things is largely external. We do not draw; we do not train the eye to see or the hand to feel and touch, and artistic objects remain in a measure strange and unintelligible to us. The whole tendency of modern life and of modern education is to delegate those functions which have to do with our inner being. We delegate our religion to a preacher or to a dogma; we delegate our education to a curriculum smoothed out to a common level; some of us even delegate the forming of an opinion on passing events to a leader who presents them to us in a "current events" class. The religion, the knowledge, the opinion of many a person belongs to some one else. Many a man prefers an inferior novel because the author not only writes it, but reads it for him, whereas to the wise man the author might almost be called an amanuensis. In any case, a writer of genuine power never does more than his share. He depends on us to complete him. And in like case, if we expect to understand and love music we must use it; the composer depends on us as much as the author does.

This external connection with music and this lack of intimacy with the thing itself naturally

leads us to lay stress on the performance of it. We revel in technique and we exalt the personalities of players and singers. In our opera houses we are satisfied only when we have an "all star" cast by whom we expect to be astonished rather than delighted and elevated. Now, fine singing, as such, is of little importance save as a means of reproducing fine music. If fine singing means a sacrifice of the musical effect; if it destroys the *ensemble;* if it limits the repertoire — then it is not worth the sacrifice. Why should it ever do so? Simply because opera-goers suffer it, and for no other reason in the world. One merely needs to mention a reasonable plan of opera — such as has been carried out for generations in French, Italian, and German cities — to be laughed at by those devotees who have sat for years at the feet of magnificence warming themselves in the effulgence of gilt and jewels. So it is with solo recitals and orchestral concerts. One continually hears people discussing the technique of pianists and violinists, or the comparative merits of our various orchestras. Local pride — the last thing in the world to connect with artistic judgment — asserts itself in favor

of one orchestra or another, until it would almost seem that the only purpose of having an orchestra was to excel all the others. How often, on the contrary, do we hear the music itself intelligently discussed? In short, we are trying to be musical vicariously by means of an occasional performance by other people of music the greater part of which is unfamiliar and, therefore, unintelligible to us. This is like trying to be religious through going to church once a week and, sitting passively, being preached and sung at! The most musical communities are not those where all the music of the year is crowded into a festival of three or four days, but those where there is the most real music made at home. A German musical festival used to be the culmination of a whole year of healthy musical activity, and the occasion for the production of new works and a wide variety of old ones. An English or an American festival is, first of all, an opportunity to hear "The Messiah," and secondly, to hear a famous soloist. The attendance on those two occasions is always much larger than at any others. Is it not true that all the higher functions of the soul of a man or a woman or of a com-

munity can be preserved only by being exercised?

In what follows I shall try to show how we may escape from the conditions in which we now too complacently rest. The material for the change is abundant, for there is in every community much more love of music than ever appears; the means are simple and inexpensive, for only a few dollars worth of good music are needed, with a room in which to practice, a piano and a leader. Let us make a start toward a sincere and intimate understanding of music through making it ourselves. Let us give up criticism of other people and begin to construct. Then shall we learn to see music as it is and to value it accordingly.

II. Our Musical Activities

As a preliminary to this discussion it will be well to look at the present status of music among us, and to see how near we come to this necessary intimacy with the art.

In any small American community the first impression one gets about music is that it is useful to fill up gaps. At the theater, before public meetings, at social affairs of one sort or

another, music is performed to a ceaseless hum of conversation or while people are entering and leaving. The art becomes, in consequence, like the cracking of the whip before the team starts, or like the perfunctory speeches and gestures of social amenities; it is nothing in itself, and falls in our estimation accordingly. It is true that, at such times, only trivial music is usually played, but this only makes the situation worse, because, after all, it passes as music. A bad piece of music at the theater or while one is dining in a restaurant is merely an annoyance; a good piece beats its head against a flood of conversation, tinkling glasses and other disturbances, and is lost; one feels as though its composer had been insulted. All this incidental music must be partly due to the decline in conversation. We are relieved of all responsibility save an occasional "yes" or "no" shouted above the din.

Real musical activity in the average small community is limited to a very small number of its inhabitants. Only a few people sing; a much smaller number play some musical instrument. There are, here and there, choirs made up of volunteer singers, but the spirit

that animated the old choirs — the spirit which Hardy has celebrated so lovingly in "Under the Greenwood Tree" — has disappeared. Hymn-singing in church is often distressingly bad, and with good reason, since the composers of modern hymn tunes seldom take into consideration the needs and wishes of congregations. Church music has been delegated by us to paid singers, and our church music becomes a thinly disguised concert, or, when the really abominable vocal quartette supplies the music, a concert outright.

What days those were when old William Dewey and Dicky, and Reuben and Michael Mail played in the Mellstock church! What a fine personal character such music had! How they loved to play — these simple rustics, and how intimate was the relation between their music and the people and the place! Read the early chapters of "Under the Greenwood Tree" and listen to the ardent discussions between the players before they go out on their Christmas rounds. "'They should have stuck to strings as we did, and keep out clar'nets, and done away with serpents. If you 'd thrive in musical religion, stick to strings, says I.' . . .

'Yet there's worse things than serpents,' said Mr. Penny. 'Old things pass away, 't is true; but a serpent was a good old note; a deep rich note was the serpent.' . . . 'Robert Penny, you was in the right!' broke in the eldest Dewey. 'They should ha' stuck to strings.' 'Your brass-man is a rafting dog — well and good; your reed-man is a dab at stirring ye — well and good; your drum-man is a rare bowel-shaker — good again. But I don't care who hears me say it, nothing will spak to your heart wi' the sweetness o' the man of strings.'"

In the preface to his book Hardy speaks of the advantage to the village churches of that time of having these volunteer players and singers, and how their displacement by the harmonium with its one player "has tended to stultify the professed aims of the clergy, its direct result being to curtail and extinguish the interest of parishioners in church doings." This holds good in our own village churches to-day, for we consider music more a means of entertaining the church-goer than of enlisting his interest in the services.

Women's clubs provide a certain sort of musical life to small communities. They fos-

ter the performance by members of rather variegated programmes of pianoforte pieces and songs, with an occasional concert by a paid performer from abroad, and they sometimes make a study of a composer or a period of music. Many of them lose sight of the only possible means of vitally influencing the musical life of their own members and of the community at large.

In some of the communities of which I am writing there are choral societies. In very few is there any well-sustained and continuous choral organization giving concerts year after year supported by the general public. The record of choral singing in America shows a constant endeavor to attain grandiose results rather than to foster the love of choral singing for itself. Singing societies are continually wrecked by the expense of highly paid soloists, and are continually striving for something beyond their reach.

This statement would not be complete were we to omit the instruments which play themselves. The educational possibilities of these instruments have not been realized, for they are used chiefly for amusement. In spite of

the extraordinary selections of music which one finds in people's houses, and in spite of the seemingly incorrigible propensity to hear singing, as opposed to hearing music, — I mean the exaggerated and grotesque singing of certain famous people who care chiefly for sensation, — the graphophone, which has the practical advantage of being portable and inexpensive, — it has transformed many a lonely farmhouse, — and the mechanical piano-players have become so popular that one can but conclude that there are multitudes of people whose desire for music has never before been satisfied. Would that this desire could be turned into proper channels; that these instruments could be used systematically to build up taste and develop understanding of great music. The larger number of people using them have no means of knowing what to buy. If they could hear the best music their allegiance would probably be secured. How many parents ever think of the responsibility laid upon them of preserving or improving the musical taste of their children by a careful supervision of the records or rolls used with these instruments?

This completes the list of our own personal activities in music. And we have to admit that the most discouraging item of all comes at the end. For we make little music of our own, by our own firesides where all good things should begin, and where we should find the community in embryo. What a delightful element in family life is the gathering together of young and old to join in singing! How few families cultivate this custom! How few parents, whether they themselves care for it or not, realize that their children would enjoy it and be helped by it! Why should not such parents begin at once and be encouraged, or even taught by their children until all can sing together heartily and well? Is it not worth while preserving the musical sense of children, so that when they reach your age they will not be helpless as you are? Are you satisfied to have your child's music merely bought and paid for outside the home? How can you expect it to flourish under such conditions? Let the children teach you, if need be. Copy them, learn their songs by ear, and find out what music really is!

This somewhat meager showing of musical

activity does not completely represent our connection with the art, however, for nearly all but the smallest communities spend considerable sums for concerts by paid performers from abroad. But it is doubtless true that the majority of the people in any small community hear very little real music at all save at occasional concerts, and if a fine composition is performed they seldom hear it again, so that it is clearly impossible for them to understand it. In towns of from five to twenty thousand people all over the country there is very little consciousness of what music really is. Highly paid performers occasionally appear, and local pride asserts itself to provide them with the adulation to which they are accustomed, but real musical activity or musical feeling is confined to a few.

In large communities these conditions are duplicated and even exaggerated. There nearly all the music is bought and paid for, and very little is home-made. Nearly all choirs are composed of paid singers. In cities, as in the country, choral societies are struggling to find men who care enough about singing to attend rehearsals. There, too, children go their rounds

of "music" lessons. The only possible way to estimate the state of music in our cities is to look at the population as a whole. By counting up the number of fine concerts in fashionable halls one arrives at no significant conclusions. Do we sing at home, or when we are gathered together in friendly converse? Are there small centers in cities where good music can be heard? Is there any good music within reach of people of small means? The millionaire regales his friends with the playing of his private organist (in imitation of the old patron days of art, but generally without the love and understanding of music which was the sole justification for the proceeding), but does the dweller in the modest flat ever have a chance to hear good music? These are questions we need to ask if we want to estimate the state of music in our great cities. Is not all this grand music, as I have said, merely a largess of our prosperity?

The most grandiose and disconnected form of our musical activity is the opera. And when we consider the love of drama which finds expression in nearly every small community in a dramatic club, we cannot but deplore the almost complete detachment of opera from our

natural thoughts, feelings, and instincts. Of this detachment there is no doubt whatever; the whole plan of American operatic productions is exotic, aristocratic, and exclusive.

It is quite true that we are continually improving our musical status. The effect of all our fine music may indeed be observed, but our progress is undeniably slow, particularly when we remember with what a liberal endowment we start. That endowment is very little less than other peoples possess. Our children are musical, and there is no reason why we should not be. Moreover, the strain of ideality which runs through American life, however naïve it may be, would seem to make us especially qualified to love and understand music.

III. WHAT WE MIGHT DO

I have indicated in a former chapter something of our needs as regards the musical education of children. The problem before me now is how to persuade American men and women into active coöperation in making music. It is obvious that there is only one way of doing this, and that is by singing. Only an infinitesimal number of people can play musi-

cal instruments, but nearly everybody can sing. To play requires constant practice. Singing in groups does not. In their right estate every man and every woman should sing.

Now my urgent appeal for singing does not mean that every village, town, or city should turn itself bodily into a huge singing society. Some people will sing better than others and will enjoy it more, or have more time for it. But there are constant opportunities for large groups of people to sing — in church, on Memorial Day, at Christmas time, at patriotic gatherings, or at dedications. Nothing is more striking on such occasions than the total lack of any means of spontaneously expressing that which lies in the consciousness of all, and which cannot be delegated. What a splendid expression of devotion, of commemoration, of dedication, of sacred love for those who died in our Civil War would a thousand voices be, raised up as one in a great, eternal, memorial hymn! What do we do? We hire a brass band to be patriotic, devout, and commemorative for us. This inevitably tends to dull our patriotism and our devotion. To live they must spring forth in some sort of personal expression. In a village

I know well, this custom mars an otherwise deeply impressive observance of Memorial Day. The "taps" at the soldiers' graves in their silent resting places, the sounds of minute guns booming, the long procession of townspeople, the calling of the roll of the small company of soldiers who marched away from that village green half a century ago, with only an occasional feeble "Here" from the handful of survivors, the lowering of the flag on the green with all heads uncovered, all eyes straining upward — these make the ceremony fine and memorable. It needs to complete it only some active expression on the part of every one such as singing would provide.

"I know not at what point of their course, or for how long, but it was from the column nearest him, which is to be the first line, that the King heard, borne on the winds amid their field music, as they marched there, the sound of Psalms — many-voiced melody of a church hymn, well known to him; which had broken out, band accompanying, among those otherwise silent men." So relates Carlyle, in "Frederick the Great," of the march of Frederick and his army before the battle of Leuthen. "With

men like these, don't you think I shall have victory this day?" says Frederick. Is not such singing a wonderful thing? Those soldiers, with a common dedication to duty, and a common disdain of death, send up to some dimly sensed Heaven, from the very depths of their being, a song. How otherwise could they express the thoughts and feelings that must have been clamoring for utterance in their sturdy breasts? Their bodies were marching to battle. What of their souls? Shall the very spirit of them slumber on their way to death?

And we? We watch from afar; we are dumb; we look on this profoundly moving ceremony, this simple pageant, and utter nothing of what we feel and what we are. Why do we not sing? Is it not partly because of that self-consciousness which hangs about us like a pall, and partly because we were never made to like singing well enough to pursue it? The former difficulty we could overcome easily enough if the right opportunity continually offered itself. The latter, too, would disappear as occasion arose when we could sing something worth singing. "The Star-Spangled Banner" is a candle-snuffer on the flame of patriotic feeling;

never was there an air more unsuited to its purpose. Since we have almost no indigenous national melodies, why should we not sing the old songs, chorals, and hymns that have survived all sorts of national changes and belong to every people? The tune for "America" is not an American tune, neither is it English. It originated in Saxony. There is no nationalism to stand in the way of such music, because it speaks elementally and universally. There are scores of fine melodies which we could well use.

The one place where singing might be fostered is in church. But where the worshipers are asked to sing a hymn pitched too high for them, or one that moves too quickly, or is full of unfamiliar and difficult progressions in both melody and harmony, what other result can be expected than poor singing and the gradual abandonment of all music to a paid choir? The real purpose of the hymn tune has been lost. It was intended to serve the needs of all the people, and to do this it must be simple in both melody and harmony, and within the range of every man, woman, and child in the congregation. The sturdy old hymns and cho-

rals of our forefathers were so. Nothing is finer in church music than good unison singing in which every one takes part. No skilled choir singing can ever take its place.

Even the manner of singing hymns has changed. Many of them are raced through at a pace which leaves one half the congregation behind, and totally eclipses the other half! In many of the old hymn tunes there is a pause at the end of each line, during which the members of the congregation had a reasonable chance to take breath. Even these pauses have often been eliminated, thus destroying the sense of the music and giving a colder shoulder still to the musical and devotional aspirations of the congregation. (If space permitted I should like to dwell here on the genesis of some of these old tunes. They were deeply embedded in the common life of our remote forefathers, and had no taint of self-consciousness in them. Springing from the soil, they survived all changes of dogma and custom. And they will survive. We shall come back to them when we have survived our present attack of prettiness.)

The decline in hymn-singing is evident

enough. Save in churches where the liturgy restrains the ambitions of the choir, almost anything is possible; and even under that restraint there is a constant tendency toward display. What is the office of church music? Is it to astonish or delight the congregation? Is it to supply them with a sacred concert or fine singing? To take their minds off the situation in which they find themselves? To ease the effect of a dull sermon, or obliterate the effect of a good one? To serve as a bait to catch the unwary non-church-goer, or as a means of retaining the waverer within the fold? Or is it to induce devotion and religious feeling, to keep the moment sacred and without intrusion? If the choir is to sing alone, why should we accept from it display pieces, or arrangements from secular music, or silly "sacred" songs overburdened with lush sentiment, or anthems of a certain fluent type composed by anybody who can put a lot of notes together in agreeable sequence? Why should we tolerate the solo in operatic style, or contemptible solo quartette music, suitable (and hardly that) for the end of a commercial "banquet"? Is there, then, no reality behind church music?

Is it merely any music set to sacred words? He who has ever studied any art knows that this cannot be true. The finest church music — of which Palestrina and Bach are the greatest exponents — is based on something more than a casual association with sacred words. In the Protestant churches of our cities the music is very largely derived from modern English sources, and I count this an obstacle to our progress. Beginning with the last half of the nineteenth century, English church music has been dominated by a school of composers whose music is charming, or pretty, or melodious, or what-you-will, but is not either profound or devout. Nearly all our organists are, musically, of English descent, but they treat their forefathers with but scant respect. There is no difficulty whatever in procuring good music for choirs. There is a supply suitable for solo singing or chorus, for small choir or large, to be purchased at any music shop. There are a dozen fine composers whose music is never heard in most American churches; composers such as Palestrina, Vittoria, and others of the great period of church music; or Bach, or Gibbons, Bryd,

and Purcell, whose music is in the true idiom, an idiom now almost entirely lost; or John Goss, Samuel Wesley, and Thomas Attwood in the early part of the nineteenth century, before the decadence had fairly begun. The earliest of this music is written for voices unaccompanied, and is therefore too difficult for any but a highly trained choir; but there are plenty of simple anthems with organ accompaniment by the early English composers named above, and there are a certain number of Bach's motets suitable for choirs of moderate ability.

Let me mention "O Thou, the central orb," by Gibbons, as an example of a fine anthem in the old style, and "Oh, Saviour of the World," by Goss, as an example of the simpler and later type. These are beautiful, simple, and dignified anthems suitable for city or country choir. If the city choirmaster will give over for a time trying to provide the congregation with brilliant music which is chiefly notable for its extravagance of technique and its striking effects, his listeners will, perhaps, be able to revert to that state of quiet devotion which the rest of the service has induced. Many choir directors

would doubtless like to use simpler and more devotional music, but are hindered from doing so because they feel upon them the weight of the opinion and taste of the congregation, and perhaps of the preacher. Everybody, regardless of his qualifications for doing so, feels at liberty to criticize the music he hears in church.

Social and musical clubs for women exist in great numbers all over the United States. They are often useful in practical ways, but their contact with artistic matters is, on the contrary, often ineffectual. They offer their members continual sips at different springs, but no deep draught at one. The average member of a women's club, if she is to be helped in anything, must be helped from the position in which she then is; and this is particularly true of music. But she is torn out of her natural environment and asked to listen to a recital of, say, modern French music, not one note of which answers to her intelligence or her feelings. The passion for the last thing in music without any knowledge of the first is fatal to any one. And when one considers the enormous membership in clubs for women in this country, one can but wish that more effort

were made to help the individual to progress simply and naturally step by step. It is not to be expected that the average woman, whose time is very likely occupied with domestic cares, should make an extended study of music; but it is possible to give her a chance to hear a few simple, good compositions, and to hear them several times during a season, so that she may learn to understand them. The more experienced and more advanced members of women's clubs are apt to dominate in these matters and to forget the needs of the others, and there is certain to be a few rare souls who dwell entirely in the rarefied atmosphere of the very latest music, and who look down on the common ignorance of the mass. Some women's clubs purvey only the performance of great players or singers, and pride themselves on their lists of celebrities, all too forgetful of those delicately adjusted scales which demand equal weight *in kind*. If a women's club in a small town (or in a large one, for that matter) should abjure for the moment pianoforte and vocal recitals of the latest music, and should proceed to devote a little time to singing, in unison, some fine old songs in which

every one could take part, a fair start would be made. I am not attempting to belittle the musical capabilities of these clubs, nor am I decrying expert performances; I am merely speaking for the average woman who has had little opportunity for musical education or musical experience, and who is usually left far behind as club programmes run, yet who is capable of understanding music if it be brought to her in the proper manner. Ask her to sing with you and she is brought into the fold instead of straying blindly outside. Every meeting of a women's club (why qualify? — of any club, save, perhaps, a burglar's, where silence would be desirable) should begin with a hearty song. Step by step — not a violent leap to a dizzy height; we cannot become musical by the force of our aspiration even though it be quite sincere; nature unrelentingly exacts of us that same slow growth which she herself makes. There is no to-morrow.

If all the people in a community expressed themselves at appropriate times and seasons by singing, it would naturally follow that a goodly number of them would form themselves into a singing society. This society would satisfy the

desire of the community to hear such music as can be performed only after considerable practice. I cannot emphasize too strongly the connection between the community and the singing society. The latter should be the answer to the community's desire, and not be a spectacle — if I may mix my metaphors to that extent.

IV. AN EXPERIMENT

I live in a town of some six thousand inhabitants which about answers to the description given near the beginning of this article. There was a singing society in the place about thirty years ago, but since then there has been little choral singing. Two years ago I asked some thirty people to come together to practice choral singing. I then stated that I should like to train them if they would agree to two conditions: first, that we should sing none but the very best music, and second, that our concerts should be free to the townspeople. These conditions were at once agreed to and we started rehearsing. We found it possible to get the use of the largest church containing a good organ, and we found four people who played

the violin and two the violoncello. Our little orchestra finally grew until we had some eight or ten string players. We borrowed kettle-drums and one of our enthusiasts learned to play them.

We have given three concerts, at each of which the church was more than filled — it seats about six hundred people. Our programmes have contained Brahms's "Schicksalslied" (Song of Fate) and parts of his "Requiem," Bach's motet, "I Wrestle and Pray," arias from the "St. Matthew Passion," and similar compositions. Our soloists have been members of our chorus, with little previous experience of such music as we have been singing, but with a profound sensibility to it brought about by continued practice of it. The townspeople who have come to hear our music have given certain evidence of a fact which I have for many years known to be true, namely, that when people have a chance to know thoroughly a great composition it invariably secures their complete allegiance. We have therefore repeated our performance of these various works, sometimes singing one piece twice in the same concert. We have given, for example,

the "Schicksalslied" three times in two years, and both singers and audience are completely won over to it.

Our singing society is supported by the payment of fifty cents each by any individual who cares to subscribe. We give two open concerts a year, at which six hundred people hear the finest choral music at a total annual expense of about seventy-five dollars. Every one connected with the project gives his or her services free. Our concerts take place on Sunday afternoons. At the last one I tried an interesting experiment. Bach's motet, "I Wrestle and Pray," is based, as is common in his choral pieces, on a chorale which is sung by the sopranos in unison, with florid counterpoints in the other parts. At the end the chorale is given in its original form, so that the congregation may join in the singing of it. It was a simple matter for us to get six hundred copies of this chorale reproduced by mimeograph, and these were distributed in the pews. The result was almost electrifying to one who had heard the feeble church singing of feebler hymns in our churches. The second time the motet was sung — we performed it at the beginning and at the

end of this concert—nearly every one joined in and the echoes rolled as they had never rolled before in that church. Why? These very same people send up feeble, timid, disorganized, slightly out-of-tune sounds every Sunday morning in their various churches. Has a miracle happened that they are lustily singing together? Not at all. They have merely been offered an opportunity to do what they are all quite capable of doing, namely, singing a hymn suited to them. This chorale has a range of but five tones—from *f* to *c;* it is largely diatonic, proceeding step by step of the scale, and it is noble and inspiring. How often had such an opportunity been presented to them before? Why not?

The members of our chorus are such people as one would find in most American towns of the same size. Perhaps we are more than usually fortunate in our solo singers and our orchestra. I believe the chief reason why a project like this might be difficult in many places is because it might not be possible to find a leader who cared more for Bach and Brahms than for lesser composers. The technical problem is not extreme, but the leader must have unbounded

belief in the best music and tolerate nothing less. The moment this latter condition lapses, choral singing will lapse — as it would deserve to do.

There are many small communities where choral concerts on a large scale are occasionally given. Great effort and great expense are not spared. Several hundred voices, a hired orchestra, and hired soloists make the event notable. But the music performed is of such a character that no one wants to hear it again; neither the singers who practice it nor the audience who listen to it are moved or uplifted. There have even been systematic efforts in some middle western states to establish community singing. The effect of such efforts depends there, as here, on the kind of music which people are asked to sing, for this is the heart of the whole matter. No advance in music, or in anything else, can be expected without constant striving for the very best. And it is quite within bounds to say that most of these efforts are nullified by lack of a really high standard. Finally, let me say that a concert of good music by a local choral society is, to the people of any community, immensely more valuable

than a paid musical demonstration by performers from abroad which costs five times as much money.

V. Music as a Social Force

Leaving this actual experience and its effects on the community, let us ask ourselves what this singing means to the individuals who do it. In the first place, it makes articulate something within them which never finds expression in words or acts. In the second place, it permits them to create beauty instead of standing outside it. Or, to speak still more definitely, it not only gives them an intimate familiarity with some great compositions, but it accustoms them to the technique by means of which music expresses itself. They learn to make melodic lines, to add a tone which changes the whole character of a chord; they learn how themes are disposed in relation to one another; they come into intimate contact with the actual materials of the art by handling them. This, we do not need to say, is the key to the knowledge and understanding of anything. You cannot understand life, or love, or hate, or objects, or ideas, until you have dealt in them yourself.

Singing has the profound psychological advantage of giving active issue to that love of beauty which is usually entirely passive.

The artist has two functions: he draws, or paints, or models; he uses language or sounds. This comprises his technique. But he also possesses imaginative perception. Now, nothing is more certain than that our understanding of what he does must be in kind. We learn to understand his technique by actual experience of it. So, also, we learn to enter into the higher qualities of his art by the exercise of the same faculties which he uses. Our feelings, our minds, and our imaginations must take a reflection from him as in a mirror. If the glass is blurred or the angle of reflection distorted we cannot see the image in its perfection. The light comes from we know not where.

Let any reader of these words ask himself if the statement they contain of the qualities of music and of our relation to it could not with equal force be applied to his own business or occupation. Is not his understanding of that business or occupation based on these two essentials: first, familiarity with its methods and materials, and, second, some conception

of the real meaning, significance, and possibility that lie behind its outward appearance and manifestation?

I have not laid sufficient stress on the advantage to men of singing. Not only does it enable them to become self-expressive, but it gives them the most wholesome of diversions, it equalizes them, it creates a sort of brotherhood, it takes their minds off per cents, and gives them a new and different insight. This is, of course, not accomplished by the kind of music men now sing, which is chiefly associated with sports and conviviality. So long as music is only outside us, so long as we educate our children without bringing them into actual contact with its materials, giving them little real training in the development of the senses, just so long will it remain a mystery, just so long will its office be misunderstood. What a perplexity it is now to many of us! How it does thrust us away! We have got beyond being ashamed to love it, but we love it from afar.

From a sociological point of view this discussion has thus far been somewhat limited. Now, the possibilities in music to weld to-

gether socially disorganized communities have never been fully realized in America. Were we to set about using it directly to that end, we should find out how valuable it is in breaking down artificial barriers. By choral singing, people in any one locality can be brought into a certain sympathy with each other. Groups who attend the same church, the fathers and mothers of children whom the settlements reach — wherever there is a "neighborhood" there is a chance for singing. It needs only a person who believes in it, and who will rigidly select only the best music. And where neighborhood groups have been singing the same fine music, any great gathering of people would find everybody ready to take part in choral singing. This would make community music a reality, and would doubtless so foster the love of the art as eventually to affect the whole musical situation. Any one who has ever had personal experience of bringing fine music to those who cannot afford to attend concerts knows that such people are as keen for the best as are those who can afford it. There is no one so quick to appreciate the best as the person who lives apart from all those

social usages of ours which constitute our silk-spun cocoons. There we lie snugly ensconced, protected from sharp winds, completely enshrouded, while these other folk are battling with life itself. We may be satisfied with a gleam or two through the mesh; they are not. They meet reality on every hand and know it when they see it. No make-believe can deceive them.

And when I say this I mean that the experiment has been tried over and over again. In what are called "the slums" of the greatest American and English cities I have seen hundreds and even thousands of poor people listening to the music of Beethoven, and to a few simple words about it in rapt and tense silence, and have heard them break out into such unrestrained applause as comes only from those who are really hungry for good music. Put a good orchestra into any one of these places and you will find the best kind of an audience. Such people have no taint of hypercriticism, no desire to talk wisely about the latest composer. They have not constructed for themselves a nice little æsthetic formula which will fit everything — a sort of pro-

tective coloring; their minds are not "made up."

Let us not misunderstand this situation. I am not writing about painting or sculpture, for I know that these arts involve certain perceptive and selective qualities of the mind which require long training. I am writing about music, which appeals to a sense differentiated and trained long before the sense for color-vibration or for beauty of form was developed, a sense which we possess in a highly developed state in very childhood.

Imagine a small opera house in the lower East Side of New York or in the North End or South End of Boston, which the people there might frequent at sums within their means; imagine a small Western city with such an opera house; and compare the probable results with those now attained by our gorgeous and needlessly expensive operatic performances which, whether at home or abroad, leave little behind them but a financial vacuum, and a dim idea that somehow opera means famous "stars" singing in a highly exaggerated manner in a strange language, in stranger dramas, where motives and purposes are stranger still. Con-

certs and operatic performances such as I have advocated would supplement and complete our own musical activities. These paid artists would be playing and singing to us in a language we ourselves had learned by using it. Music would be domestic; we should understand it better and love it more.

I am familiar with the old argument that concerts and operas so conducted would not pay. To this I reply that it is probably true. Does settlement work pay? Does a library pay? Does any altruistic endeavor anywhere pay? No; nothing of this sort ever shows a money balance on the right side of the ledger. But we do not keep that column in figures. It foots up in joy, not in dollars. The best kind of social "uplift" would be something that made people happier. The real uplift is of the soul, not of the body. Let a rift of beauty pierce the dull scene. Let us have a taste of heaven now; and let it be not yours or mine, but theirs. In music everybody makes his own heaven at the time.

But it is not money that is lacking. Hundreds of thousands are annually spent to make up the deficits of our symphony orchestras.

Millions are spent for the physical well-being of our poorer people. Beauty for the well-to-do, who are, like as not, too well-to-do to care much for it; materialistic benefits for the poor and unfortunate, who are fairly starving for something bright and joyous. What would it not mean to these latter were they able to go once a week to a hall in their own part of the city, to hear a fine concert at a fee well within their means, and to know that there would be no chairman there to tell them "what a great privilege," etc., but that they would be let alone to enjoy themselves in their own way. These, after all, make up the great body of our city populations; from these humble homes come the future American citizens; in some ways they are superior to us, for they survive a much harder battle, and preserve their self-respect in face of enormous difficulties. Why should we dole out to them what *we* think they need? Why not offer them something that puts us all on the same level?

The inevitable conclusion to be drawn from an investigation of our musical situation is that we need only opportunities of expressing ourselves. Every village contains a potential sing-

ing society, every church contains a potential choir, every family in which there are children might sing simple songs together. There is a singing club hidden away in every neighborhood. Every city might have, on occasion, thousands of people singing fine songs and hymns. What is the present need? Leaders: educated musicians who have learned the technique of their art and have, at the same time, learned to understand and appreciate the greatest music, and who prefer it to any other. Our institutions for training musicians are sending out a continual stream of graduates, many of whom begin their labors in small towns and cities. Nearly every community has at least one man who has sufficient technical knowledge of music to direct groups of singers, large and small. What kind of music does he, in his heart, prefer? The answer is to be read in programmes here and there, in the record of unsuccessful singing societies, in the public performances of "show pieces." Should not our institutions pay more attention to forming the taste of their students? Is it really necessary to teach them technique through bad examples of the art of music? Can they

safely spend several years dealing with distinctly inferior music for the sake of a facile technique? Is rhetoric or oratory superior to literature? There is no such thing as teaching violin or piano-playing *and* teaching music. If the violin or piano teaching deals with poor music which the pupil practices several hours a day, no lessons in musical history, theory, form, or æsthetics can counteract the effect of that constant association. We cannot advance without leaders. We look to the training schools for them. And these schools cannot expect to supply them to us unless they so conduct their teaching as to develop in students a love and understanding of the best.

This article, then, expresses my conviction that the average American man or woman is potentially musical. I believe the world of music to be a true democracy. I am convinced that our chief need is to make music ourselves. I believe that under right conditions we should enjoy doing so; I think all art is closely related to the sum of human consciousness. And just as I see great music based on what we are and what we feel, so I see the expert performance of music as being merely our own

performance magnified and beautified by extreme skill. I see, in short, a necessary and natural connection between ourselves and both composer and performer. I believe that all the great pictures and sculpture and music lay first in the general consciousness and then became articulate in one man. I believe no statesman, no philosopher, no, not even a Christ, to be conceivable save as he lies first in men's hearts. What they are *in posse* he is *in esse*. That we all are more musical than we are thought to be; that we are more musical than we get the chance to be — of this there is no doubt whatever.

CHAPTER V

THE OPERA

I. WHAT IS OPERA?

The form of drama with music which we loosely call "opera" is such a curious mixture of many elements — some of them closely related, others nearly irreconcilable — that it is almost impossible to arrive at any definite idea of its artistic value. A great picture or piece of sculpture, a great book or a great symphony represents a perfectly clear evolution of a well-defined art. You do not question the artistic validity of "Pendennis" or of a portrait by Romney; they have their roots in the earlier works of great writers and painters and they tend toward those which follow. The arts they represent grew by a slow process of evolution, absorbing everything that was useful to them and rejecting everything useless, until they finally became consistent and self-contained. The development of opera, on the other hand, has been a continual compromise

— with the whims of princes, with the even more wayward whims of singers, and with social conventions.

Its increasing costliness (due sometimes to the composer's grandiloquence and sometimes to the demands of the public) has necessitated producing it in huge opera houses entirely unsuited to it; and, being a mixed art, it has been subject to two different influences which have not by any means always been in agreement. Its life-line has been crossed over and over again by daring innovators who, forgetting the past, have sought to force it away from nature and to make it an expression of excessive individualism. Methods which would find oblivion quickly enough in any pure form of art have been carried out in opera, and have been supported by an uncritical public pleased by a gorgeous spectacle or entertained by fine singing. All the other art-forms progress step by step; opera leaps first forward, then backward; it becomes too reasonable, only to become immediately afterward entirely unreasonable; it passes from objectivity to subjectivity and back again, or employs both at the same time; it turns a man into a woman,

or a woman into a man; it thinks nothing of being presented in two languages at once; it turns colloquial Bret Harte into Italian without the slightest realization of having become, in the process, essentially comic: in short, there seems no limit to the havoc it can play with geography, science, language, costume, drama, music, and human nature itself.

Any attempt, therefore, to deal here with the development of opera as a whole would be an impossible undertaking. We should become at once involved in a glossary of singers (now only names, then in effect constituting the opera itself), an unsnarling of impossible plots, an excursion into religion, into the ballet, into mythology, demonology, pseudo-philosophy, mysticism, and Heaven knows what else. We should see our first flock of canary birds, — released simply to make us gape, — and we should hear a forest bird tell the hero (through the medium of a singer off the stage) the way to a sleeping beauty; we should hear the hero and the villain sing a delightful duet and then see them turn away in different directions to seek and murder each other; we should find the Pyramids and the

Latin Quarter expressible in the same terms; our heroines would include the mysterious and demoniac scoffer, Kundry, the woman who doubts and questions, the woman who should have but did not, and the woman who goes mad and turns the flute-player in the orchestra to madness with her; we should see men and women, attired in inappropriate and even unintelligible costumes, drink out of empty cups, and a hero mortally wound a papier-mâché dragon; we should have to shut our eyes in order to hear, or stop our ears in order to see; if we cared for music, we should have to wait ten minutes for a domestic quarrel in recitative to finish; if we cared for drama, we should have to wait the same length of time while a prima donna tossed off birdling trills and chirpings. We should, in short, find ourselves dealing with a mixed art of quite extraordinary latitude in style, form, dramatic purpose, and musical texture.

It will be sufficient for our purposes, therefore, to state that both sacred and secular plays with music have existed from the earliest times, and that their development has tended toward the form as we now know it.

The introduction of songs into plays was, in itself, so agreeable and interesting that their use continually increased until some vague operatic form was reached in which music predominated.

But there are two great revolutionary epochs to which proper attention must be paid if we are to understand opera at all. The first of these is the so-called "Florentine Revolution" in the years 1595 to 1600, and the second is the Wagnerian reform in the middle of the last century.

II. OPERA IN THE OLD STYLE

The "Florentine Revolution" was an attempt to create an entirely new type of opera in which all tradition was thrown to the winds. To "Eurydice," the best known of these Florentine operas, its composer, Peri, wrote a preface, from which we quote the following: "Therefore, abandoning every style of vocal writing known hitherto, I gave myself up wholly to contriving the sort of imitation (of speech) demanded by this poem." (Is this, indeed, Peri speaking? Or is it Gluck, or Wagner, or Debussy?) In any case, the

abandonment, in any form of human expression, of every style known hitherto is a fatal abandonment, for no art, or science, or literature can throw away its past and live. The Florentine Revolution was not revolution, but riot, for it undertook to tear down what generations had been slowly building up, and to substitute in its place something not only untried but (at that time) impossible. It was an attempt to found a new art *entirely detached* from an old one. Beethoven without Haydn and Mozart, Meredith without Fielding, the Gothic without the Classical, a Renaissance without a birth, daylight without sunrise. It was an entirely illogical proceeding from first to last, but opera came forth from it because opera can subsist — it has, and does — without logic or even reasonableness.

There had been composed before the year 1600 the most beautiful sacred music the world possesses — that which culminated in the works of Palestrina. A style or method of expression had been perfected, and this style or method was gradually and naturally being applied to secular and even to dramatic forms. There were at that time, also, songs of the

people which had been often used in plays with music, and which might have supplied a basis for opera. But the creators of the new opera would have none of these. They had a theory (fatal possession for any artist): they wanted to revive the Greek drama, and they believed that, in opera, music should be subservient to the text. It was Peri and his associates who first saw this will-o'-the-wisp, which has since become completely embodied into a fully equipped and valiant bugaboo to frighten and subdue those who love music for music's sake. All that one needs to say on this point is that there is no great opera in existence, save alone "Pelléas et Mélisande" by Debussy, in which the music is not supreme over the text (and Debussy's opera is unique in its treatment and leads nowhere — or, if anywhere, away from opera). Peri's reforms were artistically unreasonable, but the composers who followed him gradually evolved what is called the aria or operatic song and did eventually make a more or less coherent operatic form, although a long time passed before opera unified in itself the various elements necessary to artistic completeness.

It was only a short time, however, before opera attained the widest favor all over Europe, a favor which it has enjoyed from that day to this. The reasons for this never-waning popularity are found first in the natural preference on the part of the public for the human voice over any instrument. For whatever facility of technique or felicity of expression musical instruments may have, they lack the intimate human quality of the singing voice. The voice comes to the listener in terms of himself, whereas an instrument may be strange and unsympathetic and awaken no response. So complete is this sympathy between the singer and listener that almost any singer with a fine voice (she is, very likely, called a "human nightingale") is sure to attract an audience, no matter what she sings or how little musical intelligence she shows. (It is this sympathy, too, which inflicts on us the drawing-room song, the last word in utter vacuity.) Coupled with this is the delight the public takes in extraordinary vocal feats of agility. The singer vies with a flute in the orchestra, or sings two or three notes higher than any other singer has ever sung, and the public

crowds to hear her. But it is useless to dwell on this: the disease is incurable; there will always be, I fear, an unthinking public ready for any vocal gymnast who sings higher or faster than anybody else, or who can toss off trills and runs with a smiling face and a pretty costume, and in entirely unintelligible words. And, second, when this singing, which the public dearly loves, is coupled with the perennial fascination of the drama, the appeal is irresistible.

I do not need to dwell here on the quality in the drama which has made it popular from the remotest time until now. One can say this, however: that to people who are incapable of re-creating a world of beauty in their own minds — although nature surrounds them with it, and imaginative literature is in every library — the stage is a perpetual delight. There they behold impossible romances, incredible virtues and vices, heroes and heroines foully persecuted but inevitably triumphant, impossible scenes in improbable countries, everything left out that is tiresome and habitual and necessitous, no blare of daylight but only golden sunrise and flaming sunset: the impossible realized

at last. These qualities are in all drama to a greater or less extent, for they embody the essence of what the drama is. Æschylus and Shakespeare divest life of its prose as completely as does a raging melodrama, for a play must move from one dramatic and salient point to another; and while those great dramatists imply the whole of life, — whereas the ordinary play implies nothing, — they do not and cannot present it in its actual and complete continuity.

Now the drama is subject more or less to public opinion and to public taste, because in the drama we understand what we are hearing. On the other hand the opera, considered as drama, is almost free from any such responsibility, because it is sung in a foreign language; or if, by chance, in our own tongue, the size of the opera house and the disinclination of singers to pay any attention to their diction renders the text unintelligible. So the libretto of the opera escapes scrutiny. "What is too silly to be said is sung," says Voltaire.

Let us note also that when an art becomes detached from its own past, when it is not based on natural human life, and does not

obey those general laws to which all art is subject, it is sure to evolve conventions of one sort or another and to become artificial. This is to be observed in what is called the "rococo" style of architecture, as well as in the terrible objects perpetrated by the "futurists" and "cubists" (anything that is of the future must also be of the past, no matter whether it is a picture, or a tree, or an idea). Opera was soon in the grip of these conventions from which, with a few notable exceptions, it has never escaped. Even the common conventions of the drama, which we accept readily enough, are in opera stretched to the breaking point. For many generations operas were planned according to a set, inflexible scheme of acts; a woman took a man's part (as in Gounod's "Faust"); characters were stereotyped; the position of the chief *aria* (solo) for the prima donna was exactly determined so as to give to her entrance all possible impressiveness; the set musical pieces (solos, duets, choruses, and so forth) were arranged artificially and not to satisfy any dramatic necessity. There is some justness in Wagner's saying that the old conventional opera was "a concert in costume."

An example of this conventionality and lack of dramatic unity may be found in the famous quartette scene in Verdi's "Rigoletto," an opera which is typical of the Italian style (in which, in Meredith's phrase, "there is much dallying with beauty in the thick of sweet anguish"). In this scene there are two persons in hiding to watch two others. The concealment is the hinge upon which, for the moment, the story swings. But the exigencies of the music are such that, before the piece has progressed very far, all four are singing at the top of their lungs and with no pretext of concealment — in a charming piece of music, indeed, but quite divested of dramatic truth and unity. And then, naturally enough, the thin veneer of drama having been pierced, they answer your applause by joining hands and bowing, after which the two conceal themselves again, the music strikes up as before, and the whole scene is repeated.

But one of the most artificial elements in the old operas was the ballet. Its part in the opera scheme was purely to be a spectacle, and great sums were lavishly spent to make it as gorgeous as possible. It had usually nothing

whatever to do with the story, but was useful in drawing an audience of pleasure-lovers who did not take opera seriously. Once upon a time, in London, by an extraordinary unlucky stroke of fate, Carlyle was persuaded to go to hear an opera containing a ballet; whereupon he fulminated as follows: "The very ballet girls, with their muslin saucers round them, were perhaps little short of miraculous; whirling and spinning there in strange mad vortexes, and then suddenly fixing themselves motionless, each upon her left or right great toe, with the other leg stretched out at an angle of ninety degrees — as if you had suddenly pricked into the floor, by one of their points, a pair, or rather a multitudinous cohort, of mad restlessly jumping and clipping scissors, and so bidden them rest, with open blades, and stand still in the Devil's name!"

One remembers, also, "War and Peace," with its scene at the opera — and Tolstoï's reference to the chief male dancer as getting "sixty thousand francs a year for cutting capers." So, looking over the older operas which still hold their place in the repertoire, we think of them as rather absurd, and comfort our-

selves with the reflection that to-day opera has outgrown its youthful follies and has become a work of art.

III. WAGNER AND AFTER

Then came the second great operatic reform, — that of Wagner, — which was supposed to free us from the old absurdities and make of opera a reasonable and congruous thing. This, Wagner's operas, at the outset, bade fair to be. In "Der Fliegende Holländer," "Tannhäuser," and "Lohengrin" there is a reasonable correspondence between the action and the music; we can listen and look without too great disruption of our faculties. Wagner's librettos are, with one exception, based on mythological stories or ideas. His personages are eternal types — Lohengrin of purity and heroism, Wotan of power by fiat, Brunhilde (greatest of them all) of heroic and noble womanhood. He adopted the old device by means of which certain salient qualities in his characters — such as Siegfried's youth and fearlessness, Wotan's majesty, and so forth — were defined by short phrases of music called *leit-motifs;* he made his orchestra

eloquent of the movement of his drama, instead of employing it as a "huge guitar"; he eliminated the set musical piece, which was bound to delay the action; he kept his music always moving onward by avoiding the so-called "authentic cadence," which in all the older music perpetually cries a halt.

But by all these means Wagner imposed on his listener a constant strain of attention: *leit-motifs* recurring, developing, and disintegrating, every note significant, a huge and eloquent orchestra, a voice singing phrases which are not parts of a complete melody then and there being evolved, — as in an opera by Verdi, — but which are related to something first heard perhaps half an hour before in a preceding act (or a week before in another drama): we have all this to strain every possibility of our appreciative faculty, and *at the same time* he asks us to watch an actual combat between a hero and a dragon, or to observe another between two heroes half in the clouds with a God resplendent stretching out a holy spear to end the duel as he wills it, while a Valkyrie hovers above on her flying steed. Or he sets his drama under water, with Undines swimming about and a

gnome clambering the slippery rocks to filch a jewel in exchange for his soul. Yes, even this, and more; for he asks us to witness the end of the world — the waters rising, the very heavens aflame — when our heart is so torn by the stupendous *inner* tragedy of Brunhilde's immolation that the end of the world seems utterly and completely irrevelant and impertinent.

After all, we are human. We cannot be men and women and, at the same time, children. We should like to crouch down in our seat in the opera house and forget everything save the noble, splendid, and beautiful music, seeing only just so much action as would accord with our state of inner exaltation. An opera must be objective or subjective; it cannot be both at the same time. The perfection of "Don Giovanni" is due to the exact equality between the amount and intensity of the action and of the musical expression — or, in other words, to the complete union of matter and manner, of form and style. The "Ring" cycle is objective and subjective; it is the extreme of stage mechanism (and more), and, at the same time, everything that is imaginatively

profound and moving. It is impossible to avoid the conclusion that Wagner in those great music-dramas lost sight of the balance between means and ends, and the proportion between action and thought. His own theories, and the magnitude of his subject, led him to forget the natural limitations which are imposed upon a work of art by the very nature of those beings for whom it was created. The "Ring" dramas should be both *acted* and *witnessed* by gods and goddesses for whom time and space do not exist, and who are not limited by a precarious nervous system. No one can be insensitive to the great beauty of certain portions of these gigantic music-dramas, — every one recognizes Wagner's genius as it shows itself, for example, in either of the great scenes between Siegfried and Brunhilde, — but the intricate and well-nigh impossible stage mechanism and the excursions into the written drama constitute serious defects. (For the scene between Wotan and Fricka in "Das Rheingold" and similar passages in the succeeding dramas are essentially scenes to be read rather than acted.)

One would suppose that Wagner had made

impossible any repetition of the old operatic incongruities. Quite the contrary is the case. One of the latest Italian operas is, if anything, more absurd than any of its predecessors. What could be more grotesque than an opera whose scene is in a mining camp in the West, whose characters include a gambler, a sheriff, a woman of the camp, and so forth, whose language is perforce very much in the vernacular, whose plot hinges on a game of cards, — an "Outcast-of-Poker-Flat" opera, — and this translated, for the benefit of the composer, into Italian and produced in that language? "I'm dead gone on you, Minnie," says Rance; "*Ti voglio bene, Minnie*," sings his Italian counterpart.

"Rigoletto" does entrance us by the beauty and the sincerity of its melodies; it is what it pretends to be; it deals with emotions which we can share because they derive ultimately from great human issues. The Count, Magdalina, Rigoletto, and Gilda are all types; we know them well in literature — in poetry, novel, and drama; they are valid. We accept the strained convention of the scene as being inevitable at that point in the development of

the opera. But after Wagner's reforms, and the influence they exerted on Verdi himself, the greatest of the Italians, it would seem incredible that any composer could lapse into a "Girl of the Golden West."

Nearly all Puccini's operas are a reversion to type. The old-fashioned lurid melodrama appears again, blood-red as usual; as in "La Tosca," which leaves almost nothing to the imagination — one specially wishes that it did in certain scenes. "Local color," so-called, appears again in all its arid deception — as in the Japanese effects in the music of "Madame Butterfly"; again we hear the specious melody pretending to be real, with its octaves in the orchestra to give it a sham intensity. It is the old operatic world all over again. When we compare any tragic scene in Puccini's operas with the last act of Verdi's "Otello," we realize the vast difference between the two. It is true that Puccini gives us beautiful lyric moments — as when Mimi, in "La Bohème," tells Rudolph who she is; it is true, also, that we ought not to cavil because Puccini is not as great a composer as Verdi. Our comparison is not for the purpose of decrying one at

the expense of the other, but to point out that the greater opera is not called for by the public and the lesser is; that we get "La Bohème," "Madame Butterfly," and "La Tosca" twenty times to "Otello's" once, and that we thereby lose all sense of operatic values.

The most trumpeted operatic composer of to-day is the worst of operatic sinners. Nothing could be more debasing to music and to drama than the method Strauss employs in "Electra." In its original form "Electra" is a play of profound significance, whose art, philosophy, and ethics are a natural expression of Greek life and thought. It contains ideas and it presents actions which, while totally alien to us, we accept as belonging to that life and thought. In the original, or in any good translation, its simplicity and its elemental grandeur are calculated to move us deeply, for we achieve a historical perspective and see the meaning and significance of the catastrophe which it presents. This great story our modern composer proceeds to treat pathologically. Nothing is sacred to him. He invests every passion, every fearful deed with a personal and immediate significance which entirely destroys

its artistic and its historical sense. The real "Electra" is an impersonal, typical, national, and religious drama; Hofmannsthal and Strauss have made it into a seething caldron of riotous, unbridled passion.

The lead given by Strauss in "Salome," "Electra," and, in different form or type, in "Der Rosenkavallier" has been quickly followed. "The Jewels of the Madonna" is an "Electra" of the boulevard, in which the worst sort of passion and the worst sort of sacrilege are flaunted openly in the name of drama. It belongs in the "Grand Guignol." Let any reasonable person read the librettos of current operas and form an opinion, not of their morals, — for there is only one opinion about that, — but of their claims on the attention of any serious-minded person.

I refer to the moral status of these stories only because many of them stress the abnormal and lack a sense of proportion. Art seeks the truth wherever it be, but the truth is the whole truth and not a segment of it. A novel may represent almost any phase of life, but it must keep a sense of proportion. Dostoïevsky pushes the abnormal to the extreme limit, but

on the other hand he is "a brother to his villains" and he gives us plenty of redeeming types. The hero in "The Idiot" is a predominating and *overbalancing* character. The object of all great literature is to present the truth in terms of beauty. "Tess of the D'Urbervilles" is as moral as "Emma." But the further one gets from a deliberate form of artistic expression like the novel, the less latitude one has in this respect. An episode in a novel of Dostoïevsky would be an impossible subject for a picture. So opera, which focuses itself for us in the stage frame and within a limited time, must somehow preserve for itself this truthfulness and fidelity to life as it is. "The Jewels of the Madonna" might serve as an episode in a novel of Dostoïevsky, or of Balzac; as an opera libretto it is a monstrosity.

IV. WHEN MUSIC AND DRAMA ARE FITLY JOINED

I have referred to these various inconsistencies and absurdities of opera, not with the idea of making out a case against it; on the contrary, I want to make out a case for it. This obviously can be done only by means

of operas which are guiltless of absurdities and of melodramatic exaggeration, which answer the requirements of artistic reasonableness, and are, at the same time, beautiful. This cannot be said of "Cavalleria Rusticana" (Rustic Chivalry — Heaven save the mark!), "La Bohème," "La Tosca," "The Girl of the Golden West," "Thaïs" (poison, infidelity, suicide, sorcery, and religion mixed up in an intolerable *mélange*), "Contes d'Hoffman" (a Don Juan telling his adventures in detail) — these are bad art, not because they are immoral, but because they are untrue, distorted, without sense of the value of the material they employ.

Operas which are both beautiful and reasonable do exist, and one or two of them are actually in our present-day repertoire. The questions we have to ask are these: Can a highly imaginative and significant drama, in which action and reflection hold a proper balance, in which some great and moving passion or some elemental human motives find true dramatic expression — can such a drama exist as opera? Is it possible to preserve the body and the spirit of drama and at the same time to preserve the body and spirit of music?

Does not one of these have to give way to the other? We want opera to be one thing, and not several. We want the same unity which exists in other artistic forms. We want to separate classic, romantic, and realistic. If opera changes from blank verse to rhymed verse, so to speak, we want the change to be dictated by an artistic necessity as it is in "As You Like It." We want, above all, such a reasonable correspondence between seeing and hearing as shall make it possible for us to preserve each sense unimpaired by the other. A few such operas have been composed. A considerable number approach this ideal. From Gluck's "Orfeo" (produced in 1762) to Wagner's "Tristan" (1865) the pure conception of opera has always been kept alive. Gluck, Mozart, Weber, Wagner, and Verdi are the great names that stand out above the general level.

Gluck's "Orfeo" is even more interesting since the dark shadow of Strauss's "Electra" has appeared to throw it into relief. Once in a decade or two "Orfeo" is revived to reveal anew how nobly Gluck interpreted the old Greek story. And it must be remembered that Gluck lived in the latter part of the eighteenth

century, when music was quite inflexible in the matter of those dissonances which are considered by modern composers absolutely necessary to the expression of dramatic passion.

After Gluck came Mozart with his "Don Giovanni," preserving the same balance between action and emotion, with an even greater unity of style and the same sincerity of utterance. Mozart possessed a supreme mastery over all his material, and a unique gift for creating pure and lucid melody. In his operas there is no admixture: his tragedy and his comedy are alike purely objective — *and it is chiefly this quality which prevents our understanding them.* We, in our day and age, cannot project ourselves into Mozart's *milieu;* the tragedy at the close of "Don Giovanni" moves us no whit because it is devoid of shrieking dissonances and thunders of orchestral sound. Our nervous systems are adjusted to instrumental cataclysms. (We are conscious only of a *falling* star; the serene and placid Heavens look down on us in vain.) Could we hear "Don Giovanni" in a small opera house sung in pure classic style, we should realize how beautiful it is; we should no longer crave

the over-excitement and unrestrained passion of "La Tosca"; we should understand that the deepest passion is expressible without tearing itself to tatters, and that music may be unutterably tragic in simple major and minor mode. Don Giovanni is a type of operatic hero, — he may be found in some modified form in half the operas ever written, — but Mozart lifts him far above his petty intrigues and makes him a great figure standing for certain elements in human nature. (It is the failure of Gounod to accomplish this which puts "Faust" on the lower plane it occupies.) The stage setting of "Don Giovanni," — the conventional rooms with gilt chairs, and the like, — the costumes, the acting, the music (orchestral and vocal), are all unified in one style. And this, coupled with the supreme mastery and the melodic gift of its composer, makes it one of the most perfect, if not the most perfect, of operas.

Beethoven's "Fidelio" (produced in 1805) celebrates the devotion and self-sacrifice of a woman — and that devotion and self-sacrifice actually have for their object *her husband!* It is a noble opera, but Beethoven's mind and

temperament were not suited to the operatic problem, and "Fidelio" is not by any means a perfect work of art. The Beethoven we hear there is the Beethoven of the slow movements of the sonatas and symphonies; but we could well hear "Fidelio" often, for it stands alone in its utter sincerity and grandeur.

The romantic operas of Weber tend toward that characterization which is the essential equality of his great successor, Wagner, for "Der Freischütz" and "Euryanthe" are full of characteristic music. Weber begins and ends romantic opera. (Romantic subjects are common enough, but romantic treatment is exceedingly uncommon. Scott's "Bride of Lammermoor," for example, in passing through the hands of librettist and composer becomes — in Donizetti's "Lucia di Lammermoor" — considerably tinged with melodrama.) There is evidence enough in "Der Freischütz" and "Euryanthe" of Weber's sincerity and desire to make his operas artistic units. Each of them conveys a definite impression of beauty and avoids those specious appeals so common in opera.

Meanwhile, in the early part of the nine-

teenth century, *opéra comique* was flourishing in France. Auber, Hérold, Boieldieu, and other composers were producing works in which the impossible happenings of grand opera were made possible by humor and lightness of touch. The words of these composers are full of delightful melody and are more reasonable and true than are many better-known grand operas.

Then comes the Wagnerian period, with its preponderance of drama over music. In "Tristan und Isolde" Wagner, by his own confession, turned away from preconceived theories and composed as his inner spirit moved him. "Tristan" is, therefore, the work of an artist rather than of a theorist, and although it is based on the *leit-motif* and on certain other important structural ideas which belong to the Wagnerian scheme, it rises far above their limitations and glows with the real light of genius. In "Tristan" the action is suited to the psychology. It is a great work of art and the most beautiful of all recantations. In it we realize how finely means may be adjusted to ends, how clearly music and text may be united, how reasonable is the use

of the *leit-motif* when it characterizes beings aflame with passion; how the song, under the influence of great dramatic situations, can be expanded; how vividly the orchestra can interpret and even further the actions; how even the chorus can be fitted into the dramatic scheme — everywhere in "Tristan" there is unity. This is not true of most of Wagner's other operas. "Die Meistersinger" comes nearest to "Tristan" in this respect. May we not say that of all the music-dramas of Wagner, "Tristan" and "Die Meistersinger" lay completely in his consciousness unmixed with philosophical ideas and theories? In them the *leit-motif* deals chiefly with emotions or with characteristics of persons rather than with inanimate objects, or ideas; in them is no grandiose scenic display; no perversity of theory, but only beautiful music wedded to a fitting text.

Wagner's reforms were bound to bring about a reaction, which came in due season and resulted in shorter and more direct works, such as those of the modern Italians. No operas since Wagner, save Verdi's "Otello" and "Falstaff," approach the greatness of his music-dramas, and the tendency of many of these

later works has been too much toward what we mildly call "decadence." But there is a great difference between the truthfulness and artistic validity of "Carmen" and that of "La Bohème" and "La Tosca." The former is packed full of genuine passion, however primitive, brutal, and devastating it may be; and its technical skill is undoubted.

The most interesting phrase of modern opera is found in the works of the Russians. It was inevitable that they should overturn our delicately adjusted artistic mechanism. Dostoïevsky's "The Brothers Karamazov" is as though there never had been a Meredith or a Henry James, and Moussorgsky's "Boris Godounov" is as though there had never been a Mozart or a Wagner. It has something of that amorphous quality which seems to be a part of Russian life, but, on the other hand, it has immense vitality. How refreshing to see a crowd of peasants look like peasants, and to hear them sing their own peasant songs; and what stability they give to the whole work! "Boris Godounov" gravitates, as it were, around these folk-songs, which give to it a certain reality and truthfulness.

V. Opera as a Human Institution

These various works have long since been accepted by the musical world as the great masterpieces in operatic form. Many of them are practically out of the present repertoire of our opera houses. Were we to assert ourselves — were the general public given an opportunity to choose between good and bad — we should hear them often. And who shall say what results might not come from a small and properly managed opera house, with performances of fine works at reasonable prices?

Opera is controlled by a few rich men who think it a part of the life of a great city that there should be an opera house with a fine orchestra, fine scenery, and the greatest singers obtainable. It does not exist for the good of the whole city, but rather for those of plethoric purses. It does not make any attempt to become a sociological force; it does not even dimly see what possibilities it possesses in that direction. Opera houses and opera companies are sedulously protected against any sociological scrutiny. They are persist-

ently reported to be hot-beds of intrigue; they trade on society and on the love of highly paid singing; they surround themselves with an exotic atmosphere in which the normal person finds difficulty in breathing, and which often turns the opera singer into a strange specimen of the *genus* man or woman; they go to ruin about once in so often, and are extricated by the unnecessarily rich; they are too little related to the community that supports them save in the mediums of money and social convention.

These artificial and false conditions are bound to bring evils in their train, but these conditions and these evils are chiefly the result of our own complacency. Were opera in any sense domestic; were opera singers to some extent, at least, human beings like ourselves, moving in a reasonable world; did we go to hear opera as we go to a symphony concert, or to an art museum, — to satisfy our love of beauty, and quicken our imagination by contact with beautiful objects; were the conditions of performance such as to enable us to hear the words, then would opera become a fine human institution, then would it take

its place among the noble dreams of humanity.

In my endeavor to make some distinctions between good and bad opera I have drawn a somewhat arbitrary line. I do not wish to give the impression that I think all opera on one side of the line is bad and on the other good. I have tried to strike a just balance by applying certain admitted principles of artistic construction and expression. From these principles, which lie at the basis of life and, therefore, of art, opera has unjustly claimed immunity.

And finally we come to that point in our argument where reasoning must stop altogether. For opera is to many people a sort of fascination entirely outside reason. They refuse to admit it as a subject of discussion; they enjoy the spectacle on the stage and the spectacle of which they are a part; the sight of three thousand people well dressed like themselves comforts them; the fine singing, costumes, and stage-setting, the gorgeous orchestra throbbing with passion entirely unbridled — all these they enjoy in that mental lassitude which is dear to them. They are,

perhaps, slightly uncomfortable at a symphony concert; here there are no obligations. Opera is, in short, to such people a slightly illicit æsthetic adventure.

CHAPTER VI

THE SYMPHONY

I. WHAT IS A SYMPHONY?

In the first chapter I discussed the nature of music itself in order that I might clear away certain popular misconceptions about it and arrive at some estimate of what it really is. In the intervening chapters I have dealt with various phases of music: I have discussed it in connection with words or action, as a sociological force, and as a matter of pedagogy, and in so doing I have had to take into consideration all sorts of non-musical factors. Now the symphony is "pure music," so called; it exists as a separate and distinct thing whose only purpose is to be beautiful and true to life. Furthermore it has always been largely independent of its audience. The opera has been subject to the vagaries of singers, to the demands of the audience for fine costumes and scenery; the symphony, on the contrary, has grown naturally and freely, being hindered only by the slow development of instruments

and of the technique of playing them. Nearly every great symphony has persisted in the face of the opposition of the public and of many of the critics; the gibes hurled at the First Symphony of Brahms were as bitter as those hurled at the Second Symphony of Beethoven. In discussing, therefore, what is undoubtedly the greatest of musical forms, I desire first to state as nearly as may be what, in its essence, it is.

A symphony is, of course, like other music in being an arrangement of rhythmic figures, of melodies (usually called "themes") and of harmonies. But before describing it as such — before dealing with its materials, its form, its history, and its place in the art of music — I wish to treat it solely as a thing of beauty expressed in terms of sound. Many people seem to think music an art dealing with objects or with ideas. Some, never having become sensitized to it in childhood, look upon it as of no importance whatever. A large number have tried to perform it on an instrument and have failed. Others have succeeded at the price of thinking of it only in terms of technique. A certain happy few, some of whom

can perform it, and some of whom cannot, are satisfied to take it as it is and be stimulated by it. These are the true musicians and we should all aspire to join their happy company.

What we call a symphony is merely a series of ordered sounds produced by means of instruments of various kinds. It is sound and nothing else. Our programme books tell us about "first themes" and "second themes," and we make what effort we can to patch together the various brilliant textures of symphonic music into a coherent pattern, but the music we seek lies behind these outward manifestations as, in a lesser sense, the significance of a great poem lies behind the actual words. So it is with all the greatest art, whatever the medium may be. The chief difference between a symphony and any other form of artistic expression — such as a novel, a play, a painting, or a piece of sculpture — is that a symphony is not a record of something else; it is not a picture of something else; it is itself only. And it is this quality or property of being itself that gives to all pure music its remarkable power. Any intelligent person, on being shown a diagram or plan of a sym-

phonic movement, could be made to understand how and why the material was so disposed, for that disposition is dictated to the composer by the nature of sound and by the limitations and capacities of human beings, and it conforms to certain principles which operate everywhere; but that understanding would not reveal the symphony to him.

There is in every one of us a region of sensibility in which mind and emotion are blended and from which the imagination acts, and it is to this sensibility that music appeals. Now, the imagination, which we believe to be the highest function of human beings, cannot act from the mind alone. Mathematics, for example, does not lie entirely in the domain of the mind, and the same thing may be said of any other department of science. The chief value of scientific studies in school and university lies in the stimulation of the student's imagination rather than in the acquisition of scientific facts. Now, we cannot conceive any act of the imagination whatever that does not glow with the radiance of emotion, so that music, in appealing to the whole being, is not so completely isolated as is generally supposed.

But the simultaneous appeal of music to the mind and the feelings has led to much confusion on the part of writers who have not been sensitive to all its qualities. In his essay on "Education" Herbert Spencer, for example, in discussing the union of science and poetry, says: "It is doubtless true that, as states of consciousness, cognition and emotion tend to exclude each other. And it is doubtless true also that an extreme activity of the feelings tends to deaden the reflective powers: in which sense, indeed, all orders of activity are antagonistic to each other." Now this statement reveals at once the limitations of a philosophic mind when dealing with something that requires apprehension by the feelings also. In listening to music the reflective powers are not engaged with objects or with definite ideas, but with pure sound that requires correlation only with itself, and the condition of mutual exclusion between thought and feeling no longer exists because the music is expressing thought and feeling *in the same terms*.[1] Spencer speaks

[1] I stated in the first chapter what justification there is for using the word "intellectual" in regard to music, and I speak here of thought in that sense.

of science as full of poetry, which is true enough, but his statement about music reveals an incapacity to understand it. And his misconceptions about art in general may be illustrated by the following concerning the axis in sculpture as applied to a standing figure: "But sculptors unfamiliar with the theory of equilibrium not uncommonly so represent this attitude that the line of direction falls midway between the feet. Ignorance of the laws of momentum leads to analogous errors; as witness the admired Discobolus, which, as it is posed, must inevitably fall forward the moment the quoit is delivered." This observation completely misses the quite sound reasons for the pose of that remarkable statue, and, if applied to sculpture in general, would destroy the famous "Victory of Samothrace" and many other fine examples of Greek sculpture.

But it is strange and mysterious, after all, that these ordered sounds should be so precious to us; that we should preserve their printed symbols generation after generation and continually reproduce them as sound, feeling them to be strong and stable and true; that we should even come to say, after many generations, that

their creator was a wise man who had in him a profound philosophy. But it is stranger still to realize how convincing this philosophy is as compared to any philosophy of the reason, and to see how profound in it is the sense of reconciliation — a reconciliation that the mind seeks in vain. Our life consists of thought, feeling, and action, phenomena of what we are, and in actual life never quite reconcilable. But the world of music is not actual life. Music is absolved from actual phenomena, and achieves by virtue of this freedom a complete and profound philosophy — a philosophy unintelligible to the mind alone, but intelligible to the complete being. The strength of every art lies chiefly in its detachment from reality. Sculpture does not gain by being realistic, picturesque, or decorative; on the contrary, it is at its highest when it is ideal, detached, and superhuman. Painting does not gain by being categorical, but is greatest when it seeks something beyond the outward, physical view. The novel or the essay depends for its greatness on its power of relating real persons, things, and ideas to that greater and deeper reality of which they are a part. In this sense music stands supreme

above the other arts because it is the most detached. The elements of thought and feeling are, in music, presented as elements; the thought is not thought even in the abstract, for it is not "about" anything; the feeling is not actual feeling, and the action is not real action. Each of these properties or states of the human being is here expressed in its essence, detached from all actual manifestation. None but the highest type of mind, none but a heart full of deep human sympathy, none but a vigorous militant spirit could have conceived and brought forth such compositions, for example, as the Third and Ninth Symphonies of Beethoven, yet they are nothing but sound—neither the thought nor the feeling nor the action is real.

But we may also truly say that in Conrad's novel it is not the person, Lord Jim, who moves us, but rather the author's deep insight into the elements of human character expressed through the central figure. A portrait by Velasquez is a portrait of the personality that lived within the outward appearance. The figure of Pendennis is not so much the youth by that name as it is youth itself—youth, care-free,

but bound by tradition and love. All great art is subjective, lying in the mind of man.

It is from this point of view, then, that I approach the symphony. I do not need now to dwell on its history, on its form, or on its means of expression, because they are merely incidental to its being a profound human document. Pure music at its highest is the will of man made manifest, and one may doubt if that will becomes fully manifest in any other of his creations. It compasses all his actions, all his thoughts, all his feelings; it translates his dreams; it satisfies his insatiable curiosities; it justifies his pride (as he himself never does); it makes him the god he would be; it is like a crystal ball, in whose mystic depths the whole of life moves in a shadow fantasy.

II. HOW SHALL WE UNDERSTAND IT?

It is obvious, then, that the only possible way to understand a symphony is to accept it as it is and not try to make it into something else. Music is not a language; it does not exist in other terms, but is untranslatable. When a trumpet blares and you make any of the conventional associations with the trumpet, such

as a battle, a hunt, a proclamation, a signal, off goes your mind on a stream of alien ideas that may carry you anywhere and that will certainly carry you farther and farther away from the music itself. Each of the orchestral instruments has its own individual association — the oboe reminds you of a shepherd's pipe, the flute of a bird's song, the French horn of hunting, and so forth; but each one of the instruments in the orchestra as you listen to it is forming lines, and adding colors, as it were, in a great design. And this design, always complete at any one point, goes on unceasingly forming itself ever and ever anew. It is always complete and always incomplete, always moving onward, always delicately poised for inevitable flight. As you listen you have lived a thousand lives; dream after dream has dissolved itself in your consciousness; each moment has been a perfect and complete existence in itself. When it is finished you awake to what you call happiness or unhappiness, peace or struggle, satisfaction or chagrin; the unreal spectacle of the world imposes itself upon you again; you are once more a human being. Why ask that glorious world in which

your nature has been freed and your soul has been disencumbered of your body to assume all the imperfections of this one? The gods, of necessity, dwell in the heavens. No, you cannot understand music by translating it into other terms, or by preserving your associations with the world in which you live. Mind and feeling, sublimated by the magic of these sounds, must detach themselves and rise to a world of pure imagination where there is no locality.

Reconciliation! A philosophy without a category; a religion without a dogma; an indestructible shadow world which offers no explanations, promulgates no opinions, and has no mission — which exists completely in itself. What more shall we ask for? Why cry to the heavens for a manifestation? Why take refuge in a so-called "system" of philosophy? Why shuffle off the whole problem on a dogma? What comfort to a squirrel in a cage to know the number of its bars? Is our slow and inevitable progress from the unknown to the unknown any more significant because we have learned to tell our beads, intellectual, religious, or æsthetic, to mumble our little formulæ, and

to pick our way, eyes downward, amongst the stones and thorns, never once glancing clear-eyed upward to the sun? We have always sought a fourth dimension, and have always had it. We want what we have not; we wish to be what we are not; and all the time they have been within our grasp. We make a far-away heaven to answer this universal cry, when our hand is on its very doorlatch. Our imagination falters most when we apply it to things nearest us. Where *can* heaven be if not here? Is it an omnibus in which you may secure a comfortable seat by paying your fare? Or is it a state of yourself toward which you continually struggle and to which you occasionally attain?

This, then, is my thesis. A symphony is not merely an arrangement of rhythms, melodies, and harmonies; it is not a record of the thoughts, feelings, and deeds of men; it is not a picture of man or of nature. Rather does it launch itself from these into the unknown. It is pure imagination freed from the actual.

The foregoing does not, in any sense, preclude that idea of a symphony which is expressible in terms of rhythm, melody, and har-

mony. What I have said has been said for the purpose of preventing a conception of it *in these terms only* (and, of course, in still lower terms). Our physical hearing is a transit to the imagination and we want the physical hearing to serve that purpose. Nothing retards it more than an attempt *at the time* to intellectualize the process. In other words, listening to a symphony should consist in giving yourself freely to it; in making of yourself a passive medium. Your study of the arrangement of themes, and so forth, should precede or follow the actual experience. And if you have no leisure or opportunity for such study and depend entirely on an occasional concert, you should nevertheless continue to pursue the same inactivity, allowing the music itself to increase your susceptibility little by little. If the mind is employed in an attempt to extricate order from confusion, it usurps for the moment the other functions of listening. And I would go so far as to say that the proper goal of a musical education should be to arrive at such a state of impressionability to pure music as would leave the mind, the feelings, and the imagination free to act subconsciously without active

direction, and without struggle. The matter is so obvious. There is the music; here is the person. It awaits him. It was created of him and for him. It is inconceivable without him. It is his spirit coming back to him purified. It is the only thing he cannot sully, and which cannot sully him, for in the very nature of it, it cannot be turned to base uses. What man would be, here he is. In making this beautiful spectacle of life, as Conrad says, he has found its only explanation. So we should avoid marring the actual experience by conscious intent on the technical details.

What I have said thus far may seem of but slight assistance to the average person who attends symphony concerts. I have stated what I thought symphonic music to be, and have urged my readers not to listen to it analytically. But my purpose here is not to attempt to blaze an easy path for the music-lover; in fact, I am unqualifiedly opposed to that too common practice of æsthetic writing. There is no easy path, and an attempt to find one is disastrous to any progress whatever. Every person who has attained to a real understanding of æsthetic objects knows that the growth

of that understanding has been slow. The characteristic weakness of our artistic status is self-deception. We are not frank with ourselves; we are unwilling to admit ourselves in ignorance; we advance opinions which are not our own. The only possible basis for advancement in anything is intellectual honesty. Information about a symphony is useless unless there is a real appeal in the music itself. So I do not attempt to provide here a panacea; just the opposite is my purpose. All I want to do is to show that the symphony is worth struggling for, and to brush away such misconceptions about it as might retard the progress of those who have the will and the perseverance to struggle. And when there is no will to struggle, nothing can be accomplished. What is called "mental lassitude" is almost a contradiction in terms.

It is obvious that a proper musical education would have solved our problems in a natural manner. If, as children, we had been taught to sing only beautiful songs; if we had been trained to listen to music; if our memory for musical phrases, rhythms, etc., had been cultivated, we should be quick in appre-

hending all the qualities of a symphony, for all our analytical reasoning would have been done beforehand. And nothing can ever take the place of such an education, because the natural taste for music, which is so strong in childhood, has in us been allowed to lapse. So that our first duty is to our children. We want them to avoid our mistakes. In every household, in every school, public or private, this ideal of music-study should be upheld — namely, that the children should enter life so prepared by their early training as to be able to enjoy the greatest music.

I take a form of pure music as a type of our highest attainment, because when music is allied to words or to action it gives certain hostages. Furthermore, the symphony evolved slowly under the law of its own being, and it represents the application to music of those general laws of proportion and balance, of unity and variety, which govern all artistic expression. It has never been subjected to alien influences ; popularity has not been its motive power; virtuosity has never dictated to it. If you understand the symphony you can apply that understanding to any other

form of music. If one compares it with the opera this distinction is at once evident. In the opera that antagonism of which Spencer speaks between states of feeling and of cognition does exist, because the mind is there appealed to through objects rather than through pure sound. The symphony speaks in its own terms; opera speaks in terms of characters in action, of costume and of scenery, as well as of music. Even the greatest operas cause you to reflect on something outside themselves — on human motives as they find expression in human action. In either "Don Giovanni" or "Tristan," although the music reaches great heights of beauty and is profoundly moving, there is the inevitable struggle between seeing and hearing, the inevitable difficulty between a simultaneous state of cognition and of feeling. The symphony entirely escapes this dilemma. No doubt great motives lie beneath it; no doubt it, too, is a drama of human life, for otherwise it could not be great as a work of art; but the play of motives in a symphony is hidden behind the impenetrable veil of sound. The Third, Fifth, and Ninth Symphonies of Beethoven are truly dramatic, but

only in this sense. They range from the tender to the terrible; they have their own emotional climaxes; they philosophize, they brood, they grin like a comic mask; action and reaction follow each other as in life itself; nothing is lacking but that one inconsequential thing, reality. Art is truth; life is but a shadow fading to nothingness as the sun sets.

III. THE MATERIALS OF THE SYMPHONY

I have said that the symphony evolved slowly under the laws of its own being, and I wish to state briefly and (as far as possible) in simple terms how that evolution came about. If I should go back to the very beginning I should have to point out that the primal difference between music and noise consists in the intensity of vibration and in the grouping of the sounds into regular series by means of accents. A series of unaccented tones does not make music. If a clock, in striking twelve, should, by accenting certain strokes, throw the whole number into regular groups, it would supply the basis for music. In any great piece of martial music these accents and these impulses in groups constitute the element that

moves us to comply with it ourselves; we beat time with hand or foot; we are infused with the momentum. And the force of the impetus may be observed at the close of nearly every piece of music where conventional chords ease off its stress. The last forty measures of the Fifth Symphony of Beethoven constitute a sort of brake on the huge moving mass. Chopin's Polonaise, opus 26, number 1, on the contrary, does not end; it stops. In Fielding's "Tom Jones" the impetus of the action is carried on so far that the climax is postponed to a point dangerously near the end of the book, which leaves us with a sense of breathlessness or even of aggravation. In music, when this impetus is of extreme vigor, any temporary displacement of it produces almost the effect of a cataclysm — as in the first movement of Beethoven's Third Symphony, where great chords in twos clash across already established metrical groups of threes. Within the metrical groups all sorts of subdivisions may exist, and these constitute what is called "rhythm" in music. Rhythm, in brief, is the variety which any melody imposes on the regular beats that constitute its time basis.

It is from this rhythmic movement that the symphony gets its quality of action, and the precursors of the symphony in this respect were the old folk-songs and dance-tunes the melodies of which are full of rhythmic diversity. The line from these early naïve compositions down to symphonic music was never broken, and there is hardly a symphony in existence that does not pay direct tribute to them.

I dwell on this point at some length because here lies a large part of the energy of music. The rhythmic figures to which I have already referred contain within themselves a primal force. They are capable of throwing off parts of themselves, and these, caught in the primary orbit, live as separate identities, until the too powerful attraction of the greater mass absorbs them again. As rhythm, then, a symphonic movement is like sublimated physical energy. As the first oscillations of its impulse strike our consciousness we are caught up into a world of movement which has the inevitability of star courses. We ourselves are all rhythm — rhythm imprisoned and awaiting release. In music we become one with all that

ceaseless movement or vibration without which there would be no physical or spiritual world at all. I say, then, that rhythm is the very heart of music; that while we are all susceptible to it (though comparatively few people can move their hands or feet or bodies in perfect rhythm — they would be much better off if they could!) we do not altogether see what significance it has as an æsthetic property of music. When the heart of music stops beating (as in one of Beethoven's scherzi) we are surprised, or perhaps disturbed, not answering to the marvelous silence; when two or even three rhythms are acting simultaneously we are confused and helpless before the most fascinating of æsthetic phenomena.

Let me next dwell briefly on that element in the evolution of symphonic music which consists in the use of several themes simultaneously. Should we trace this back to its original we should find ourselves in the ninth century. Now, while I know that this is not the place for a dissertation on any abstruse musical terms, I shall venture this much, not only because this method of writing is used in nearly all really fine music, but because a

large part of the pleasure to be derived from listening to a symphony depends on our capacity to follow the varied strands of melody that constitute it. Is it not so, also, with the novel? The chief theme of Meredith's "The Egoist" has numberless counter-themes running through and around it. It is not by any means to be found in Sir Willoughby alone, for you understand it through Vernon's good sense, through Clara's dart-like intuitions, through Mr. Middleton's patient surprise at having such a daughter, through Letitia, and Crossjay, and Horace De Cray — all these are continually explaining and illuminating the theme for you. It is true that music asks you to listen to several melodies at once, but what does the episode of Crossjay's unwitting listening to Sir Willoughby's belated declaration to Letitia ask you to do? Is it enough merely to record the scene as it is unfolded to you? Or do you remember Crossjay's father stumping up the avenue in his ill-fitting clothes? Clara's intercessions for Crossjay? Vernon's attempts to adjust himself to Sir Willoughby's overbearing grandiloquence? And do you not have to remember, especially, that Crossjay

had been locked out of his room by Sir Willoughby and had sought the ottoman as a refuge? These are all strands of the chief melody in that remarkable composition. (Not all the strands are there, for satire never tells the whole truth. "Tony" in Ethel Sidgwick's "Promise" and "Succession" is also an egoist.) A novel, then, in this sense, is not successive, but *simultaneous*. All that has been and all that is to be exist in every moment of life, for that is all what we call "the present" means. The chief difference between such play of character around an idea and the movement of many musical themes around a central one lies in the detached and spiritualized quality of sound.

It is obvious that music, written for an orchestra containing some twenty or more different *kinds* of instruments and scores of performers, must have great variety of expression. Each instrument has its own tone color, its own range, and its own technique, and each must be given its own thing to say. In this sense symphonic music is an intricate mesh of melodies, each intent on its own purpose, each a part of the whole. In no other of its varied means of ex-

pression is the symphony more strictly and more fully an evolution than in this one of complex melodic textures. There has been no hiatus. From its first great moment of perfection in the time of Palestrina, through the madrigal and fugue, through dance-tunes conventionalized in the suite, through organ pieces, oratorios, and the like, this method of writing has persisted. Wagner bases his whole musical structure on the play and interplay of melodic lines in his *leit-motifs*. Bach is all melodic texture. Music written in this manner is called "polyphonic," and the method of writing it is called "counterpoint."

In direct contrast to this is "monodic" music which employs only one melody against an accompaniment of chords. A large part of the music we hear is monodic; an aria by Puccini, a popular song, most church music — these have one melody only. So has Poe's "For Annie." Polyphonic music has the great advantage of being intensive in its expression; it evolves out of itself. When I say that almost the whole of the first movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony is evolved out of a few measures near the beginning, I

mean that the melodic fragments of the theme take on a life of their own and by so doing illustrate and expound the significance of the original thesis from which they sprang. This quality, or property in music, upon which I have laid some stress, is, then, not so much a matter of technique as of æsthetics. The thing done and the manner of doing it is each the result of general laws, and I venture to dwell on them here, not for expert, technical reasons, but because I wish to offer the listener to symphonies one of his most delightful opportunities. Note should finally be made of the important fact that only those symphonic themes which have a varied and vibrant rhythm serve well the purpose of counterpoint, for the essence of instrumental counterpoint lies in setting against each other two or more melodic phrases in contrasting rhythms.

I do not mean to imply by the foregoing that symphonic music persistently employs counterpoint as against simple melody. There are whole passages in the symphonies of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven where one tune is given out against an accompaniment of chords, and a lyric composer like Schubert employs

counterpoint somewhat rarely. But in the greatest symphonies the predominating method of expression is through polyphony.

In writing about counterpoint I have dwelt on the rhythmic quality in melody, and have stated that a well-defined and varied rhythm is essential to contrapuntal treatment. I might almost have said that all good melody depends on rhythm. I do say — expecting many a silent protest from certain of my readers — that all the greatest melodies have a finely adjusted rhythm, and I apply this statement to all melody from the folk-song to the present time. I might enumerate beautiful melodies whose effect depends on other properties than rhythm, — as the second melody in Chopin's Nocturne in G major, opus 37, number 2, — but I should add that, as melody, existing by itself, it is not fine and the reason is that its rhythm is monotonous.[1] And when I say it is not fine, I mean that it is not highly imaginative, and that it depends too much on its harmonization. And when, in turn, I say that, I

[1] As examples of melodies with finely adjusted rhythms I may cite the theme of the slow movement of Beethoven's pianoforte sonata, opus 13, and that of the slow movement of Brahms's pianoforte quartette, opus 60.

mean, perforce, that it is too emotional. The difference between such a theme and one with a really fine rhythm is the difference between Poe's "The Raven" and Keats's "Ode to a Grecian Urn." In the former the mind is being continually lulled by the soft undulation of the rhythms and rhymes; in the latter the mind is being continually stimulated by their complexities. Yet Keats's ode is as unified as Poe's lyric. There are melodies for songs for the pianoforte, for the violin, and for the orchestra; there are sonata melodies and there are symphonic melodies just as there is a shape for a hatchet and a shape for a pair of scissors — which is only stating once again the old law that the style must suit the medium of expression, or that the shape must suit the uses to which a thing is put. Symphonic themes, in contradistinction to themes for songs or short pianoforte pieces, or dances, should be inconclusive; they are valuable for what they presage rather than for what they state, and they should indicate their own destiny. The four notes with which the Fifth Symphony of Beethoven begins are so, — in fact the whole theme is valueless by itself, —

but they contain enough pent-up energy to vitalize not only the first movement, but the three which follow it. If it were possible for each reader of these words to hear — as an interlude to his reading — a series of great symphonic melodies, and if he would listen to them carefully, he would find almost every one to contain a finely adjusted rhythm.

Symphonic themes present certain difficulties to the listener whose understanding of melody is limited to a square-cut strophic tune. He is accustomed to a certain musical punctuation — a comma (so to speak) after the first and third lines of the music, a semicolon after the second, and a period at the end. And when he gets an extra period thrown in (as he does after the third line of the tune "America") he is all the happier. When he hears the opening theme of the "Eroica" Symphony break in two in the middle and fall apart, he gets discouraged, for his musical imagination has not been sufficiently developed to see that that very breaking apart presages the tragic turmoil of the whole movement. When Brahms gives out, in the opening measures of his Third Symphony, two themes at

once, he does not fathom the element of strife which is involved, and so cannot follow its progress to the final triumph of one of them.

But the symphony contains everything, and there is a place in it for lyric melody, provided the flight be long and sweeping. The "slow movement" of a symphony contains such themes, but they are not content to be merely fine melodies. They, too, must contain some potentiality which is afterwards realized. The best and most familiar example will be found in Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, where the first rhythmic unit (contained in the first three notes) of the beautiful romantic theme detaches itself and pursues an almost scandalous existence full of delicate pranks and grimaces, and comic quips and turns, now gentle, now ironic, now pretending to be sentimental, until it finally rejoins the theme again. This piece is a romance touched with comedy — a romance great enough to suffer all the by-play without the least dilution of its quality.

Any attempt in a book like this to explain the intricacies of harmonic development as it is seen in the symphony must be inconclusive. Harmony is, in itself, less tangible than either

rhythm or melody, for it lacks to a considerable extent the element of continuity. I mean by this that groups of harmonies do not possess coherence in relation to each other. They do not stay in the memory as a line of melody does; the impression we get from them is fleeting. It may touch with light or shade one brief moment in a piece of music (as it frequently does in Schubert's compositions); it may produce a bewildering riot of color (as in ultra-modern music); or it may cover the whole piece with a subdued shadow (as in the slow movement of Franck's quintette). But the real office of harmony is to serve melody. I mean by this that when two or more melodies sound together they make harmony at every point of contact, and this harmony, incidental to the movement of melodic parts, has a reality which chords by themselves cannot acquire. And the whole justification for many of the sounds in ultra-modern music lies in this one perfectly correct theory. Not that the laws must not be obeyed — as they frequently are not; not that a composer may violate nature, and do what he likes. He must, as of old, justify in reason all the disso-

nances arising from his melodic adventures. He should remember Bach, whose melodies clash in never-to-be-forgotten stridence, striking forth such flashes of strange beauty as can only come from a war of themes.

The symphony is, then, an arrangement of rhythms, melodies, and harmonies. Each of these three elements has a life of its own, — the rhythms, taken altogether, have their own coherence, the melodies theirs, and the harmonies theirs, — but each belongs to the whole. The rhythm of Poe's "For Annie" would be an impossible rhythm with which to carry forward the purposes of any part of "The Ring and the Book." Equally useless would be the rhythms of Schubert's "Unfinished" Symphony to carry forward the purposes of Beethoven's Ninth. The whole structure of Poe's poem would disintegrate if one single word fell out of place; so would the fabric of a Schubert melody were a note destroyed.

In every direction, wherever we look, this cohesion of all objects in themselves, this blending of all objects into a greater body, reveals itself. This is the basis of all religious belief, of a novel, of the composition of a picture, or

of life itself. To say that a symphony is made up of separate elements, that each of these elements has a life of its own, and that they all unite in a common purpose, is to state a truism. And to suppose that a symphony can be understood without an understanding of all its elements is to suppose an absurdity.

IV. TONE COLOR AND DESIGN

Such has been the development of the elements of symphonic music. The processes I have described are the natural processes of an art which is continually striving for wider and deeper expression. And, speaking humanly, it is not too much to say that within ourselves there should take place a complete analogue to that development and to those processes. The connection between ourselves and the sounds may graduate all the way from complete unconsciousness of their significance (even though we hear all the sounds clearly) to that state wherein they strike fire in our souls, and there passes between the imagination of the composer and our own that spark of undying fire which illumines our whole being. For in the last analysis it is not so much the music that

communicates itself as it is the soul of the composer reaching us over whatever stretch of time. He who creates beauty is immortal.

Is not this what we seek? Is not this the object of all beauty everywhere? Is it not always trying us to see if we are in tune? — as, indeed, everything else is: labor, love, objects, knowledge, religion — all these await our answer.

But I should not leave this part of my subject without setting forth the relation between these elements of symphonic music and the orchestral instruments by means of which they find expression. I do not wish to attempt here any account of orchestration, as such, but rather to point out that in symphonic music it is by the quality of tone that the essence of an idea is conveyed. The tone of the instrument is like the inflection of the voice in speaking, wherein the truth is conveyed although you speak an untruth. An oath might be a prayer but for the inflection.

The pianoforte or the violin, or any other single instrument, has but little variety of tone; the orchestra, on the other hand, has

not only four distinct groups of instruments, each group having its own tone quality, but within two of these groups[1] there are considerable differences in what is called "tone color." It is of no great importance to know that the solo near the beginning of the slow movement of the César Franck symphony is played on an English horn, but it is important to feel the quality of the tone, and to realize how largely the effect of the theme depends on it. For some obscure reason many people remain insensitive to qualities of tone color. (Perhaps they have received their musical education at the pianoforte which, under unskillful hands, differs only in loud and soft.) One so seldom observes a listener even amused by the antics of Beethoven's double-basses, and yet, in at least four of his symphonies, their behavior is at times extremely ludicrous. He whose humor ranges all the way from the most delicate, ironic smile to a terrible, tragic laughter, wherein joy and sorrow meet,—as meet they must when either presses far,—he achieves

[1] In the "wood-wind" group, so called, there are flutes, oboe, clarinets, bassoons, English horn, etc.; in the brass, there are trumpets, French horns, trombones, tubas, etc.

these remarkable effects largely by means of the tone quality of the instruments. In his Fifth Symphony he creates the most thrilling effect by means of some score or more of reiterated notes in the soft, muffled tones of the kettle-drum. In the finale to the First Symphony of Brahms it is the tone of the French horn, and again of the flute, that creates for us such profound illusions of beauty as pierce to our very soul. From the depths of the orchestra the horn chants its ennobled song; then follows the dulcet blow-pipe of the flute singing the same magic theme. These varied tones succeeding one another, or melting one into the other — these are the colors that animate and beautify the forms into which the thoughts fall. What delicate nonsense filigree the violins draw in the slow movement of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony; how sepulchral the bassoon with its mock sadness; what a vibrant quality do the violoncellos and the contra-basses give to the great melody in the finale to the Ninth; with what poignancy does the clarinet give voice to the sentiment of the second theme in the slow movement of Brahms's Third Symphony. How luxurious

and vivid is the application of all these varied hues to the design.

A fine singing voice has, perhaps, the most beautiful of all tone colors, but the sensibility of many people seems to be limited to that alone. In fact the love of singing is, in many cases, merely a sentimental thrill unconnected with any intellectual process and entirely devoid of imagination. In the orchestra the tone of the instrument is to the theme itself what the color is to the rose. It is much more than that, of course, because it is at any time both retrospective and prospective; *this* tone color is a darker or lighter shade of *that*, or, perchance, another hue entirely. The colors shift from moment to moment always as a part of the design rather than as mere color.

Taking it all together — rhythm, meter, melody, harmony, and tone color — this substance of a symphony is a wonderful thing. Nothing quite so delicately organized has ever been created by the mind and the imagination of man. With an interplay of parts almost equal to that of a finely adjusted machine, it seems to go where it wills to go regardless of anything but a whim. How marvelously does

it express both the actions and the dreams of human beings; how true is it to their deeper consciousness — a consciousness that dimly fathoms both life and death; that knows itself to have come from across the ages, and feels itself to be a part of the ages to come. It is just as likely that life is a brief, shadowed moment in an endless light, as that it is "a rapid, blinking stumble across a flick of sunshine."

CHAPTER VII

THE SYMPHONY (*continued*)

I. THE UNITY OF THE SYMPHONY

For the ordinary listener to a symphony the one great difficulty lies in "making sense" out of it as a whole. He enjoys certain themes and is, perhaps, able to follow their devious wanderings, but he retains no comprehensive impression of the symphony as a complete thing, and he may even never conceive it as anything more than a series of interesting or uninteresting passages of music. Now, it is obvious that an art of pure sound, if it is to have any significance at all, must have complete coherence *within itself*, and that the longer the sounds go on the more necessary does this coherence become. This is, of course, the problem of all music. Even opera must have a certain musical coherence, for it cannot depend entirely on being held together by the text and action; even the song must make musical sense in addition to what sense (by chance) there is in the words. Give what glowing, what

romantic, even what definite title you will to a piece of programme music, — call it "The Hebrides," or "Death and Transfiguration," or descend to such a title as "A Simple Confession," — you must still give your music coherence in itself. As a matter of fact, the titles of pieces of programme music do not lessen the composer's responsibilities in the least, and there is no fine piece of such music in existence that does not obey the general laws of form as applied to music. The title is, after all, merely a suggestion, an indication, an atmosphere. Schumann's "The Happy Farmer" is merely jolly; it is not even bucolic, and you hunt for the farmer in vain; "Träumerei" is made rhythmically vague in order to create the illusion of reverie, but has, nevertheless, complete musical coherence; "Töd und Verklarung" of Strauss contains no evidence of sacrificing its form to its so-called "subject," and the Wagnerian *leit motif* is suggestive and not didactic.

The development of form in the symphony is too large a subject to be covered here, but there are certain fundamental aspects of it upon which I may dwell with safety, since they obey

laws which apply everywhere. To make clear what I mean let me say that an art whose fundamental quality is movement must have for its problem the disposition within a certain length of time of a certain group of themes or melodies. The distinction between this art and that of painting is that in music the question is "When?" in painting "Where?" In this sense literature is nearer music than is painting, and I shall shortly point out some analogies between literary and musical forms. I stated in the first chapter the fundamental synthetic principle of music, which is that no one series of sounds formed into a melody can long survive the substitution of other series, unless there be given some restatement, or, at least, some reminder of the first. There is no musical form that does not pay tribute directly or indirectly to this principle. And this, much modified by the medium of language, applies also to literature. Most novels contain near the end a "looking backward over traveled roads"; a too great digression from any thesis requires a certain restatement of it. The first appearance of Sandra Belloni is heralded by her singing in the wood near the Poles' coun-

try house. The epilogue to "Vittoria" closes with the scene in the cathedral: "Carlo Merthyr Ammiani, standing between Merthyr and her, with old blind Agostino's hands upon his head. And then once more, and but for once, her voice was heard in Milan." The unessential characters and motives of Sandra Belloni disappear in "Vittoria" — Mrs. Chump, an unsuccessful essay in Dickens, finds a deserved oblivion; so do the "Nice Feelings" and the "Fine Shades"; but the presence of Merthyr in the cathedral is as necessary to that situation as is the absence of Wilfred. "War and Peace" would be an inchoate mass of persons, scenes, and events, were it not for certain retrospects here and there which hold the whole mass together. "The Idiot" is a striking illustration, for the early part of Mishkin's career only appears in the sixth chapter, as if to tide over more successfully the vastness of the scheme; and the final chapter brings back most vividly the experiences of his boyhood. The sonnet is the most concise example of this process, and I do not need to dwell on the precision with which it illustrates it.

One great difference exists, however, be-

tween music and literature, and that is in the number of its subjects or characters. "War and Peace," to take an extreme example, contains scores of characters, while a whole symphony would usually contain not more than twelve or fourteen themes. The prime reason for this is that themes have no established law of association, and so do not represent something else with which we are already familiar as do names of persons in books. We remember the names of such characters as Joseph Andrews or Tom Jones, or even Dr. Portsoaken, for, although they lived a long time ago, we have enough word association to contain their names and we can understand them and can follow the devious courses of their adventures and the philosophy of life they represent. (The absence of this association makes it difficult for us to remember the characters in Russian novels.) When we hear a musical theme, however, we have to remember it as such.

I have frequently stated the somewhat obvious fact that music obeys general æsthetic laws, and the foregoing is intended to show how these laws are modified by the peculiar

properties of sound. A symphony in this sense, then, is a coherent arrangement of themes. This brings me to the important question of the detachment or the unification of the several movements of a symphony. Is a symphony one thing or four? Should we listen to it as a unit, or as separate contrasting pieces strung together for convenience? The conventional answer to these questions — the answer given by the textbooks — is that a few symphonies transfer themes from one movement to another, but that, speaking generally, a symphony is a collection of four separate pieces contrasted in speed and in sentiment, etc. Now I wish to combat this theory as vigorously as possible, and I should like to rely solely on general æsthetic laws, and say that no great work of art could, by any possibility, be based on such a heterogeneous plan as that. Or I might base my opinion on psychology and say that, since there are four different movements, different in general and in particular characteristics, — one containing themes which evolve as they proceed, producing the effect of struggle toward a goal, another suited to states of sentiment, another for concise and

vivid action, and so forth,—and since the mind of a great man is a microcosm of the world and contains everything, it follows, as a matter of course, that he tries to fuse his symphony into one by filling its several parts with the various elements of himself, a process that has been going on ever since there has been any music at all. The composer is not four men, nor is his mind separated into compartments. One symphony will differ from another because it will represent a different stage in his development, but any one symphony — unless arbitrarily disjointed — will express the various phases of its composer's nature at the time, and will have a corresponding internal organism. This is sufficient evidence of the soundness of this view in the great symphonies themselves. I cannot specify at length here, but any reader having access to Mozart's, Beethoven's, and Brahms's symphonies or that of César Franck may investigate for himself. Let me merely point out a few instances which I choose from celebrated and familiar symphonies. In the last movement of the C major of Mozart (commonly called the "Jupiter") there is a rapid figure

in the basses at measures nine and ten which is derived from the beginning of the first movement. The theme of the last movement is drawn from — is another version of — the passage in measures three and four of the first movement. In Beethoven's "Eroica" the first theme of the last movement is drawn directly from the first theme of the first movement. The theme of the C major section of the "Marche Funèbre" is the theme of the first section in apotheosis, and each owes a debt to the first theme of the first movement. Illustrations of this principle could be multiplied almost indefinitely, and it is not too much to say that there is in all great music this inward coherence. In other words, form in music is not merely a sort of framework, or, if you please, a law or precedent, but the expression of an inward force.

Themes having no organic relation are, of course, introduced in symphonic movements for the play of action against each other which results from their antagonism. The novel depends largely on the same element. If it were not for Blifil there could hardly have been a Tom Jones. Sandra Belloni must have Mr.

Pericles as a foil to that finer character of hers which rises above the prima donna, and she needs Wilfred and Merthyr in order to achieve Carlo. In short, the symphonic movement is not unlike the novel which is based on the juxtaposition of contrasted or antagonistic characters or elements, the struggle between the two, and, finally, their reconciliation; and sufficient analogy could be drawn between this and life itself to illustrate the principle as a cardinal one. But I believe the symphony to be still in flux. I see no reason why it should not continue to develop from within and finally to achieve an even greater inward coherence than that already attained. This will almost certainly not be brought about by an extension of its outward form or by an enlargement of its resources — as is the case with many modern symphonies.[1] In brief, the composer is an artist like any other; he is dealing with human emotions and aspirations as other artists are; he is subject to the same laws; he, too, draws a true picture of human life in true

[1] The reason for this is one to which I referred in the chapter on "The Opera" — namely, that a work of art must not overstrain the capacities of those human beings for whom it was intended.

perspective, with all the adjustments of scene, of persons, of motives, carefully worked out — even though he deals only with sound. It is almost incredible that any one should suppose otherwise; the real difficulty is in getting the ordinary person to suppose anything! So I say that the symphony is a mirror of life, and that all the great symphonies taken together are like a book of life in which everything is faithfully set forth in due proportion and balance.

I have said that the symphony contains everything and that it has room for disorder. This is its ultimate purpose. The secret of its power lies in this. Life itself is an inexplicable thing. The great symphony compresses it into an hour of perfection in which all of its elements are explicable. Here that dream of man which he calls by such names as "heaven" or "happiness," and which he has always sought in vain, becomes not only a reality, but the only reality possible for him. For nothing would be more terrible than endless happiness or a located heaven.

II. STAGES OF ITS DEVELOPMENT

The history of the symphony is the history of all art. It moves in cycles; it marks a parabola. It began as a naïve expression of feeling; it learned little by little how to master its own working material, and as it mastered that, it became more and more conscious in its efforts; as soon as new instruments for producing it were perfected, it immediately expanded its style to correspond to the new possibilities; as its technique permitted, it continually sought to grasp more and more of the elements of human life and human aspiration and to express them. In Haydn we see it as naïve, folk-like, tuneful music, not highly imaginative, smacking of the soil — like Burns, but without his deep human feeling. In Mozart it reaches a stage of classic perfection which may be compared to Raphael's paintings. Hardly a touch of the picturesque, the romantic, or the realistic mars its serene beauty; it smiles on all alike; it is not for you or for me, — as Schumann is, — but for every one. And being purely objective it belongs to no time and lasts forever. And how delightful are Mozart's di-

gressions. He is like Fielding, who, when he wants to philosophize about his story, proceeds to write a whole chapter during which the action awaits the philosopher's pleasure. Later writers never drop the argument for a moment; if there is a lull in the action it is somehow kept in complete relation to the subject-matter. Mozart often enlivens you with a story by-the-way, but he always manages to preserve the continuity of his material. The difference between his method and that of Brahms, for example, is like that between Fielding's philosophic interlude chapters in "Tom Jones" and Meredith's "Our Philosopher," who, looking down from an impersonal height upon the characters in the story, interjects his Olympian comment.

A new and terrific force entered music through Beethoven, new to music, old as the human race — namely, the spirit of revolt. The world is always the same. In its fundamentals, human life, within our historical retrospect, remains what it was. An art takes what it can master — and no more. Music was ready; the world was in a turmoil at just that moment, and the result was what we call

"Beethoven." Mozart was his dawn, Schumann and the other Romanticists his mysterious and beautiful twilight. He himself represents at once the spirit of revolution, that inevitable curiosity which such a period always excites, and that speculative philosophy which tries to piece the meaning of new things. The world was full of flame; battle thundered only a few miles from Vienna; the spirit of equality and fraternity was hovering in the air. Beethoven's piercing vision compassed all this. He sounded the triumph of the soul of man — as in the great theme at the close of the Ninth Symphony; he took the simplest of common tunes and made it glorious — as at the end of the "Waldstein" Sonata; his imagination ranged at will over men struggling in death-grapple, over the gods looking down sardonically on the spectacle. He was the great protagonist of democracy, but he was also a great constructive mind. He never destroyed anything in music for which he did not have a better substitute, and there is hardly a note in his mature compositions that is not fixed in nature.

This great force having spent itself, the art

turns away and starts in another direction — as it must. The lyric symphony of Schubert appears. His was the most perfect song that ever asked for expression by the orchestra. With small intellectual power, with but scanty education of any sort, Schubert, by the very depth of his instinct, creates such pure beauty as to make intellectualism seem almost pedantic. He strings together melody after melody in "profuse, unmeditated art." He was a pendant to Beethoven, and often enough in listening to Schubert's music we catch the echo of his great contemporary. Then comes the so-called "Romantic School" of Schumann with its tender, personal qualities, its glamour, its roseate hues. Like all other romantic utterance it had a certain strangeness, a certain detachment from reality, and a certain waywardness which give it a bitter-sweet flavor of its own. Like all other romantic utterance, too, it was impatient and refused to wait the too-slow turning of the clock's hands; it is the music of youth and of hope. Its effect on the development of the symphony was slight. It was ill at ease in the large spaces of symphonic form, for its hues were too changing, its moods

too shifting, to answer the needs of the symphony. No really great symphonic composer appears between Schubert and Brahms, but during that period the rich idiom of the Romantic School had become assimilated as a part of the language of music.

Brahms using something of this romantic idiom, but having a broad feeling for construction, and firmly grounded on that one stable element of style, counterpoint, produced four symphonies worthy to stand alongside the best. They are restrained in style, for Brahms has something of that impersonality which is needed in music as much as in other forms of art (and one may say, in passing, that the greatest of all composers, Bach, is the most impersonal). The flexibility of the language of music increased rapidly during the nineteenth century aided by Wagner and the Romanticists, and in Brahms the symphony becomes less didactic and more introspective. I may, perhaps, make the comparison between music like his and that later stage of the English novel wherein the author desires the action to appear solely as the result of the psychology of the characters, and wherein, also,

words are made to answer new demands and serve new purposes. Brahms could not have said what he did say had he been limited to the style of Mozart; nor could Meredith had he been limited to the style of Thackeray. Brahms's symphonies, in consequence of the complicated nature of his style, are not easily apprehended by the casual listener. Let a confirmed lover of Longfellow, or even of Tennyson, take up for the first time "Love in the Valley" and he will have the same experience. Every word will convey its usual meaning to him, but the exquisite beauty of the poem will elude him. He will go back to "My Lost Youth," or to "Blow, Bugles, Blow," for healing from his bruises. Any one of my readers who has access to Brahms's First Symphony should examine the passage which begins twenty measures before the *poco sostenuto* near the end of the first movement if he wished to understand something of Brahms's powers of re-creating his material. Here is a melody of great beauty which is derived from the opening phrase of the symphony, and which has a bass derived from the first theme of the first movement. As it originally appeared it was full of stress

as though yearning for an impossible fulfillment. Here its destiny is at last attained, and the law of its being fulfilled. Music progresses from one point of time to another.

Contemporaneous with Brahms stands Tschaikovsky to reveal how varied are the sources of musical expression. No two great men could be farther apart than these — one an eclectic, calm, thoughtful, and impersonal, restraining his utterances in order to understate and be believed; the other pouring out the very last bitter drop of his unhappiness and dissatisfaction entirely unmindful of a world that distrusts overstatement and has only a limited capacity for reaction from a colossal passion. Of Tschaikovsky's sincerity there is no doubt whatever. He so believed; life was to him what we hear it to be in his symphonies. But life is not like that. If it were we should all have been destroyed long since by our own uncontrollable inner fires. So, aside from any technical considerations,— and he contributed nothing of importance to the development of the symphony, — Tschaikovsky represents a phase of life rather than life itself. Dvořak's "New World" Sym-

phony adds a new and interesting element to symphonic evolution. Dvŏrak was like Haydn and Burns, a son of the people, and the themes he employs in this symphony are essentially folk-melodies. But where Haydn merely tells his simple story with complete unconsciousness of its possible connection with life in general, Dvŏrak sees all his themes in their deeper significance. The "New World" Symphony is a saga retold.

A new phase in the development of the symphony appears in César Franck, whose musical lineage reaches back over the whole range of symphonic development and beyond. His spirit is mediæval. In his one symphony rhythm plays a lesser part, and one feels the music to be quite withdrawn from the vivid movement of life, and to live in a realm of its own. Franck was one of those rare spirits who remain untainted by the world. His symphony is a spiritual adventure; other symphonies are full of the actions and reactions of the real world in which their composers lived. This action and reaction always depends for its expression in music on the play and inter-play of rhythmic figures. Franck's sym-

phony broods over the world of the spirit; his least successful themes are those based on action.

III. CHAMBER MUSIC AS AN INTRODUCTION TO SYMPHONIES

My object in writing all this about the form and substance of the symphony, and in drawing comparisons between it and the novel or poetry, has not been to lead my readers to understand music through the other arts, for *by themselves* such comparisons are of small value. I have dwelt on these common characteristics of the arts because they exist, because they illuminate each other, and at the same time because they are too little considered. The only way to understand music is to practice it, or, failing that, to hear it under such conditions as will permit a certain opportunity for reflection. We are incapable of understanding symphonic music chiefly because we have so little practice in doing so. An occasional symphony concert is not enough. How shall this difficulty be overcome? There is a natural way out, and it consists in what is called "chamber music." A piece of chamber music

is a sort of domestic symphony. A string quartette, a pianoforte or violin sonata, a trio, quartette, quintette, etc., — these are all little symphonies; the form is almost identical, the same devices of rhythm, melody, harmony, counterpoint, and so forth, are employed. In chamber music paucity of idea cannot be covered up by luxury of tone color; everything is exposed; so that only the greatest composers have written fine music in this form. Now, if in every community there were groups of people who played chamber music together, and if these would permit their friends to attend when they practice, the symphony would soon find plenty of listeners. Such rehearsals would give an opportunity to hear difficult passages played over and over again; there would be time for discussion, and, above all, for reflection. Every town and village should have a local chamber-music organization giving occasional informal concerts. Under these circumstances a sympathetic intimacy would soon be established between the performers and listeners and the music itself. The inevitable and indiscriminate pianoforte lesson is an obstacle to this much-desired arrangement. Some of

our children should be taught the violin or the violoncello in preference to the pianoforte. Then the family circle could hear sonatas for violin and pianoforte by Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, or Brahms, and would accomplish what years of attendance at symphony concerts could not bring about. Chamber music has the great advantage of being simple in detail; one can easily follow the four strands of melody in a string quartette, whereas the orchestra leaves one breathless and confused. The practice of chamber music by amateurs would be one of the very best means of building up true musical taste. I cannot dwell too insistently on the fact that the majority of those people who do not care for such music would soon learn to care for it if they had opportunities to listen to it under such conditions as I have described. The argument proves itself, without the evidence — plentiful enough — of individuals who have gone through the experience. Furthermore, by cultivating music in this way, we should gradually break down some of the social conditions which now operate against the art. If we all knew more about it and loved it for itself, we should give over

our present adulation of technique. We should put the performer where he belongs as an interpreter of a greater man's ideas. By our uncritical adulations we place him on far too high a pedestal.

IV. THE PERFORMER AND THE PUBLIC

I have spoken of certain social conditions which affect music unfavorably. There has been always a certain outcry against music because of its supposed emotionalism. The eye of cold intelligence, seeing the music-lover enthralled by a symphony, raises its lid in icy contempt for such a creature of feeling. The sociologist, observing musical performers, wonders why music seems to affect the appearance and the conduct of some of them so unfavorably. The pedagogue, who has his correct educational formula which operates like an adding-machine, and automatically turns out a certain number of mechanically educated children, each with a diploma clutched in a nervous hand — he tolerates music because it makes a pleasant break in diploma-giving at graduation time, and because it pleases the parents. The business man leaves music to his wife and

daughters and is willing to subscribe to a symphony orchestra provided he does not have to go to hear it play. Now, if the sociologist would put himself in the place of the singer, who, endowed by nature with a fine voice, is able, on account of a public indifferently educated in music, to gain applause and an undue source of money, even though he has never achieved education of any sort whatever — if the sociologist would but think a little *about sociology*, he would perhaps finally understand that he himself is very likely at fault. For it is very likely that he knows almost nothing of this art which is one of the greatest forces at his disposal. He is, perhaps, one of the large number of persons who make musical conditions what they are. Public performers are the victims, not the criminals. We must remember of old how disastrous has been the isolation of any class of workers from their fellows.

I have referred in this and in the preceding chapters to certain unities in symphonic music — in its several elements of rhythm, melody, and harmony, and in the whole. I have said that every object is unified in itself, and that it is a part of a greater whole. In this sense a

symphony is a living thing; every member of it has its own function, and contributes a necessary part to the whole. But is not this equally true if we carry the argument into life itself and say: Here is a thing of beauty created by man; it is a part of him — one of his star-gleams; can he be complete if he loses it altogether? Can his spirit hope for freedom if he depends on his mind alone? Is the satisfaction of intellectual or material achievement enough? Would he not find in music a realm where he would breathe a purer air and be happier because he would leave behind him all those unanswerable questions which forever cry a halt to his intelligence? Moral idealism is not enough for the spirit of men and women, for, humanity being what it is, morality is bound to crystallize into dogma. The Puritans were moral in their own fashion, but they were as far away from what man's life ought to be — under the stars, and with the flowers blooming at his feet — as were the gay courtiers whom they despised. Intellectual idealism is not enough, because it lacks sympathy. We all need something that shall be entirely detached from life and, at the same time, be

wholly true to it. Our spirit needs some joyousness which objects, ideas, or possessions cannot give it. We must have a world beyond the one we know — a world not of jasper and diamonds, but of dreams and visions. It must be an illusion to our senses, a reality to our spirit. It must tell the truth in terms we cannot understand, for it is not given to us to know in any other way.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

One of the most unfortunate conditions surrounding our musical life is the small part men take in it. This is not altogether their fault. Their business is engrossing, and concert-going is made difficult for them. There should be some music for the business man between the time when he leaves his office and the hour of his dinner, and it should be so arranged as to cause him the minimum of trouble and give him the maximum of enjoyment. This means a half-hour or forty minutes of good music available, say, at five o'clock, and not too far away. It means, also, that he shall be provided with a repetition of every long or complicated composition so that he may have a chance to understand it. The average listener hears a Brahms symphony once in, say, two or three years, and there is little chance of his finding it intelligible. No doubt, in course of time this will come about. No doubt, too, workers in shops and offices will

by and by be able to hear a little really fine music at lunch time.[1] The influx of men into concert rooms would be of great benefit to the cause of music, as well as to the men themselves. We should, after a time, get rid of that curious Anglo-Saxon idea that art is effeminate, and should begin to value it for what it really is. Whenever I think of this mistaken notion the figure of Michael Angelo rises before me. There was as heroic a man as even the world of war ever produced; capable alike of the Herculean task of the Sistine frescoes, — the actual physical labors of which would kill an ordinary man (and Michael Angelo was then over sixty years old), — of the heroic Moses, and again of that most tender and beautiful of all sculpture, the Pietà; a stern and noble nature capable of fighting for his principles no matter what the risk. Or I think of Beethoven, ill, lonely, deaf, and poor, but nevertheless creating virile music of the kind we know. Or of Bach, sturdy as an oak tree, without recognition from the world, bringing up a large family on almost nothing a year,

[1] I do not mean a phonographic record of the tenor solo in "L'Elisire d'Amore," or anything of that sort. I mean something which will be more than a casual moment's entertainment.

wholesome, profound, and true — the equal in all that goes to make a man of any "captain of industry," any soldier, or any statesman. These are the ones I should match men with. I would have men listen to the strains of these composers, look at the works of that colossal genius of Italy and ask themselves: Is art effeminate or am I blind and deaf?

But men, having comparatively little leisure, cannot be expected to waste it on sentimental music or on mere virtuosity. A violinist who plays sweet little pieces, or who astonishes you by his technical skill, should expect no response from human beings who are at work day by day and hour by hour facing the hard facts of life. Men, dealing with exact laws or under the necessities of trade and barter, are forced to distinguish between true and false, between reality and unreality, for their very existence depends on so doing. I do not mean by this that these common experiences of men fit them to understand great music, but I think men possess thereby a certain sense of values and a certain discrimination between what is real and what is false, and that a great piece of real music will find an answer in them. I

believe that the opera has much to do with the average man's attitude toward music. To spend from three to four hours in an overheated and badly ventilated opera house after a day of business, and to listen to the sort of hectic emotionalism which is common in opera is enough to disgust the average business man with all music. How patient he is! But Beethoven, who loved and hated, and suffered and triumphed, we can all understand. When we come to listen to the opening of his violin concerto, for example, we must all say: Here is a man. And when we have compassed the whole of that great composition we shall learn to say: Here is reality *turned true at last*. We shall then have learned one of the great lessons that art teaches — namely, that there is nothing in the world so heroic, so noble, or so profound but that its qualities may be *increased* by the imagination and the skill of the great artist. For however profound a human emotion may be or however noble a deed, it becomes more profound or more noble when it is seen in relation to the whole of life and over a stretch of time. The artist gives it true perspective, and enables us really so to see it.

Dante the poet is greater than Dante the lover.

But my plea that music should be made easy of access for men is based chiefly on the fact that they need it. It is so easy for human beings — men or women — to become completely submerged in the details of life; and the round of daily acts and daily associations does, in course of time, completely engulf many people, so that they only catch glimpses of something beyond — glimpses of a promised land into which they never enter. I can conceive almost any business as being interesting in itself; the "game" of life has its own rewards; and there is no trade, no profession, no business that does not offer some play to the imagination. But every weight needs a counterbalance, and every human being whose daily occupation is full of practical detail must save himself or herself by some *equal force* in the opposite direction. The law is as old as life itself. The best preparation for an education in engineering is a course in the classics, and the man who grinds all things in the mill of business eventually goes into the hopper himself.

But love of beauty is a secret and inviolate thing. Our tendency to-day is to seek our salvation — of whatever kind — in the crowd. We form literary and musical clubs, and drama leagues, and art circles to accomplish what each person should do alone. This is an old human fallacy. To attempt to be literary or artistic or socialistic or religious by means of an organization is to waive the whole question. There is only one way of being literary and that is to love good literature and to read it in privacy; there is only one way to understand the drama and that is to read by yourself the great plays from Æschylus onward, and to see as many good plays as possible. I know that it is impossible to hear the symphonies of Beethoven except with some thousands of other people; nevertheless, you are yourself alone, and, by yourself, you must solve the mystery. Never can there be a more complete isolation of the individual than when, sitting with the crowd, a piece of fine music begins. Never is your own individuality so precious to you as then. Straight to your soul come these sounds, automatically separating all the diviner part of you from the lower, singling

out what is commonly inarticulate and inchoate, and fanning into life again that smothered spark which never wholly dies. How impossible it is to look at pictures with other people. The mind and the imagination demand freedom to wander at will, to ponder, to speculate. What passes from the picture to you, and from you to the picture, is a sort of trembling recognition, too delicate to be shared, too intimate to be uttered. So it is with books. You need silence and retirement so as to feel the perspective of knowledge, so that your mind may wander through whatever courses open to it.

It has often been remarked that, in America, women have now both leisure and independence to pursue the arts and to satisfy their desire for what is called "culture," and that in this respect they have taken the place frequently occupied by men. The most characteristic element in this situation is, however, that in the pursuit of intellectual or artistic advancement, woman joins a club! These clubs are of very great use to the individuals who belong to them and to the communities in which they flourish when they undertake — as

they frequently do — the betterment of social conditions. Any one familiar with what they have accomplished in this respect must pay them a real tribute. But in their pursuit of "culture" they have been less successful, and for the reasons already outlined here. They pursue too many subjects, and they dissipate their energies. But above all, they seem unconscious of the fundamental principle of education which is that one really educates one's self. For education, after all, consists in the gradual enlargement of one's own perceptions through coming in contact with greater minds, and its processes are secret and intensely personal. As you read "The Idiot," for example, you connect Mishkin with Lohengrin, Parsifal, the Arthurian legends, or even with Christ. The extraordinary account of his thoughts as he falls in the epileptic fit, and his use of the words, "And there was no more time," bring up a whole fascinating sequence of psychological speculations. The character of Nastasya calls to your memory scores of other characters from Kundry down to Sonia, and, as you read, the whole warp and woof of life, shot through and through with its drab and scarlet,

flashes before you. Now, these contacts are as nothing if some one else makes them. The spark must strike in your own imagination. You yourself must feel the current of this magnetism which reaches from the earth to the stars and makes all things akin. A good book should be a provocation to the reader. A club for "culture" is a collection of human beings each hoping for vicarious salvation through the other.

Women's clubs not only waste energy in their pursuit of knowledge, but they debilitate the intellectual strength of the individual woman. Nothing could be worse for the mind than the peaceful acceptance of the point of view of another without resistance and without the test of your own thoughts and your own personality. Smatterings of knowledge are almost useless. Nothing is yours until you make it so.

The relation between music and life is, then, an intimate and vital relation. Any person, young or old, who does not sing and to whom music has no meaning, is by just so much a poorer person in all that goes to make life

happy, joyous, and significant. Any community which employs no form of musical expression is by just so much inarticulate and disorganized as a community. Any church that buys its music and never produces any of its own loses just so much in spiritual power.

We all need music because it is a fluent, free, and beautiful form of expression for those deeper impulses of ours which are denied expression by words. Our speech is too highly specialized; we discriminate with words instead of with inflections and gestures; we smother our natural expressiveness; we hold words to be synonyms of thought, whereas thought is half feeling and instinct and imagination, no one of which can really find issue in exact terms. All great literature is inexact.

Music frees us. Not only does it let each of us say for himself what he cannot say in words, but, at its best, it reveals to us a higher reach of life, detached, yet a part of the inmost being of us all. When we truly respond to it, there is set up in us a certain harmonious vibration which tunes us to one another, to the mother earth, the everlasting sea, and to

that larger world of suns, stars, and planets of which they are a part.

Nothing ever dies. What we call death is only a transformation from one form of life to another. All the music that ever was still sounds; all the music that is to be still slumbers. Life and death are one, and, in the truest sense, the whole universe is a song.

THE END

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